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DAISY SNOWFLAKE'S SECRET

MRS. G. S. REANEY



DAISY SNOWFLAKE'S SECRET.

" A little stream had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern :
A passing stranger scooped a well,
Where weary man might turn ;
He walled it round, and hung with care
A ladle at the brink ;
He thought not much of the deed he did,
But hoped that toil might drink.
He passed again, and lo ! the well
By summer never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parchèd tongues,
And saved a life beside.

DAISY SNOWFLAKE'S SECRET.

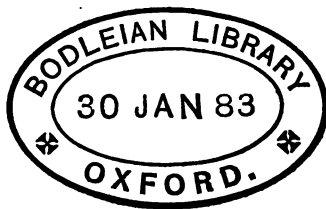
A Story of English Home Life.

BY

MRS. G. S. REANEY,

Author of

*"Our Daughters," "Our Brothers and Sons," "Morning
Thoughts for our Daughters," etc.*



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P R E F A C E.

IF my story were less true it would be less worthy of the patient reading of my sister women of all classes in society.

That my Readers may do their part—and who can limit the splendid influence of lives in earnest ? —in closing the doors of our English homes to secrets such as darkened the young heart of Daisy Snowflake, is my one longing and prayer.

I am hopeful that my story may tell itself, by the lips of some kindly reader, to the tender hearts of mothers, as they gather week by week in their “Mothers’ Meetings,” while at the same time I could wish that it might be read aloud to thoughtful girls at home or at school, who have yet to

realize, it may be, how large their influence for good or otherwise is in that matter which so greatly concerned the life of my heroine,—Daisy Snowflake.

And while venturing thus to choose the readers of my story, I would not for one moment desire to be thought to seek for it only the sympathy of those thus mentioned. It may have lessons for others. That it concerns in part, if not in whole, the general reader, perhaps no one will think to question, to whom it tells itself from page to page in homely detail. May God speed it, and make it a blessing to the hearts and homes of all who give it kindly welcome!

ISABEL REANEY.

STEPNEY HOUSE, EAST INDIA ROAD,
LONDON.

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I.

MY DAIKY.



I.

MY DAISY.

"Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eyes ;
In every gesture dignity and love."

"DON'T, Linda, oh! pray don't!" and the soft brown eyes of Daisy Snowflake, a young girl between ten and eleven years of age, filled with tears as she laid her hand beseechingly upon the arm of her companion, a fair-haired, merry-looking girl who was evidently only some few months younger than herself.

And this was the cause of the tearful beseeching. The two girls, who had been amusing themselves in the very pretty garden of Dovedale Rectory until five minutes ago, had been attracted by the passing of a funeral upon the road which separated the Rectory grounds from the village fields. Running swiftly to a corner of the paddock, where they could watch the high road almost unobserved,

slightly stooping down by a substantial wooden fence, they had looked at the solemn procession, possibly bound for a cemetery some three miles distant, with thoughtful mien and becoming gravity, until Linda, always a little wild in her fun, had bent her head in her hands endeavouring to suppress a quiet laugh. It was this action of Linda's which had called forth the tearful reproach.

"The plumes *did* look so funny nodding to each other as they went along," whispered Linda in answer ; "but I really didn't mean to be wicked, Daisy ; only *supposing* I had, I do not think you need have cried about it ;" and she gave Daisy a reproachful look.

Daisy returned the look ; indeed her eyes, still wet with tears, rested a full second upon Linda's face before she spoke, then she said under her breath, for the last mourning coach was just passing,—

"Oh ! Linda, never, *never* laugh at a funeral ! It might be somebody's *mother* they were taking to be buried !"

Who but a motherless girl could have said this ?

Linda's mood instantly changed. She looked upon her cousin with a tender, awed expression. She could not understand the deep feeling which had led Daisy to protest at her levity, but she could reverence Daisy for possessing it. She felt heartily ashamed, while at the same time she made a little excuse for herself, saying mentally, "Ah! if I had gone through Daisy's troubles, I should think of these things naturally, of course, just as she does; only, perhaps, I should not want to keep these thoughts so long."

"Daisy's troubles!" After all, Linda only knew about these troubles on the *outside*, just as half the world knows the difficulties and the trials of the other half. To Linda her cousin's troubles were gathered into the thought of black dresses and black ribbons; and when, at the end of twelve months, they had been put on one side, Linda's idea would have been that the trouble which these dismal clothes bore witness to as having existed would become a thing also passed away, put on one side, forgotten as far as the heart's feeling concerned the individual and daily life. Hence the wonder that Daisy had *not* forgotten.

Linda was neither heartless nor thoughtless, but simply ignorant of the power and pain of sorrow ; sorrow itself being only a name to her. Her young life had been full of sunshine. Possessing the gift of natural good temper and brightness of spirits,—which in many cases means simply possessing the gift of *health*,—Linda had just glided through life, appropriating its joys as if they were hers in virtue of her youth, and *expecting* life's sorrows in the days when she should be gray-haired and toothless, when, with a wrinkled face and other signs of advancing age, she would no longer be able to enjoy the pleasures which satisfied her now.

Linda was as impulsive as she was high-spirited. The moment the funeral had really passed she threw her arms round her cousin's neck, and said sweetly, "Forgive me, dear old Day! I promise never to do it again."

And Daisy whispered, "Thank you, Linda," and set that young lady wondering why she had not said "All right" instead. But Daisy *meant* the "Thank you," and she would not have meant "All right."

We can never understand this sweet little woman

aright unless we know something about those troubles as they concerned and touched her very life. So let us, to save further explanation by-and-bye, when we can less afford to break off the story and become familiar with what has gone before,—let us at once say a word or two about the past as it concerns our heroine.

Daisy had come into the world as a Christmas morning gift to her gentle, sweet-faced mother. At first it was feared that the little new-born babe would soon fly away back again to the heaven from whence she came. Her mother said that she had a far-off, shadowy look in her eyes, which were ever glancing upwards as if waiting for a sign in the blue sky above to say the hour had come when she was to return, and that those tiny, waxen hands were ever unconsciously folding themselves together in prayer.

But the nurse thought that, having come, “the bairn would make her mind up to stay a bit and comfort the poor, ailing mother—who wanted it sorely enough, poor darling!” and Betsy Trueman, one of the finest specimens of an old-fashioned monthly nurse, would heave a deep-drawn sigh,

and often find her glasses needed a little rubbing up, though she would not have admitted willingly that their sudden dimness had anything to do with two large tear-drops which by-and-bye found their way silently down her dear old furrowed cheeks. If Betsy Trueman were tender-hearted even to tears over the sorrows of others, she was too noble a woman to show it, where a display of sympathy on her part might tell to the curious that she was in the possession of secrets of which they could know nothing.

And Nurse Trueman was right. Daisy Snowflake did live to be a comfort to her mother—ah! how great a comfort none but that poor sorrowful mother herself really knew! The weany babe became a bonny, round-of-limb, winsome little lassie, long before the first twelve months of her little life had passed, and when at two years old she could trot by mother's side and pay *her* little visits to the sick and poor, with both little chubby hands well filled with flowers, as "*something to make somebody glad,*" Nurse Trueman was not the only one to bless the child, and to prophesy that she would be sure to

carry a blessing with her wherever she went in the days to come.

When Daisy was in her sixth year, a new sorrow came to the home already much darkened by care. Daisy's father had been a sea-faring man when her mother married him, but for some years past he had rented a farm. Lacking all practical knowledge of farming, and utterly without personal gifts of steadfastness of purpose and perseverance, it was no wonder that Mr. Snowflake's enterprise proved a great failure. Mrs. Snowflake was quite relieved when her husband made arrangements for a sale to pay off debts which had been collecting for some time, but she was totally unprepared for the announcement on a certain Sunday following their removal into a small house in the village that on the subsequent Thursday Mr. Snowflake intended starting for America: if he got on well there he would send for his wife and Daisy; if badly, they might never hear of him again.

Although deeply moved by this sudden announcement, Mrs. Snowflake remained outwardly very calm. Not so little Daisy; she burst into

a passionate flood of tears, and exclaimed between her sobs,—

“Going—away—without us—and—perhaps not—coming—back—again?—I—shall—come—and—fetch—you—myself—I shall!”

A man less hardened and selfish would have been touched by his little daughter's earnestness; but Mr. Snowflake, who in the ten years of his married life had been going down an inclined plane, yielding to influences which had greater power with him than the affection of his gentle wife or the loving endearments of his winsome child,—Mr. Snowflake gazed upon Daisy unmoved.

And within a few days he had started. Mrs. Snowflake had worked hard to get everything ready for him; she had spoken hopefully of his new project, had taken the greatest interest in his plans,—those at least which he had condescended to make known to her,—and throughout had been most brave and patient and unselfish. But not even in the good-bye did she get any display of affection from her husband. Fortifying himself by drinking heavily of brandy, he had congratulated her that she had her little property settled up o

herself, so that she could be independent of him, had kissed Daisy almost without a word, and whistling to his favourite dog who was to accompany him, he had departed as if he were going but for a short journey to return at nightfall, whereas to the last he had declared that he was tired of failure, and if this new scheme did not answer they would never hear of him again.

Daisy watched her father from the window as he walked from the little house down the village to the station, where his luggage was already waiting for him. The child even ventured to wave her little pocket-handkerchief, "*in case* he should look round." But that was just what Henry Snowflake did not intend doing. If he did he might be softened and feel compunctions which he would prefer to stifle. So Daisy watched him step by step away until he turned the corner and was out of sight, then she looked round to her mother, who stood behind her, and discovered that she was weeping bitterly.

"Don't cry, mammy," said she, fondly, "I am your own little Daisy, and I love you *all*. Won't the Lord Jesus take care of father, and of us?"

There, mammy darling, *please* don't cry any more!" And then Daisy added in a whisper as she stroked her mother's cheek, "You know we are always most happy when we are quite alone by ourselves!"

True, very true, but therein was the pain. When Mr. Snowflake had been at home,—at least this had always been the case of late years,—Mrs. Snowflake was restless and anxious and sad; and little Daisy had not failed to notice she had the best romps with mother, the best laughs and the best fun, when they were "by themselves."

The cause of this fact was unknown to Daisy. Thanks to her mother's faithfulness in thought and word to him who by repeated unkindness and cruel neglect would have embittered the heart of a less true wife, Daisy had always bright thoughts of her father. In a sense the thoughts were more *reflections* than *realities*, for though she dearly loved the father of whom the mother spoke to her so often, she felt a little frightened of the father whom she knew in daily life. He was so often cold and hard, and sometimes even cruel in the way he spoke and acted. But then

at such times mother would be doubly loving and tender, and Daisy would forget all excepting how "she loved mother and how mother loved her." We can see that, under these circumstances, to Daisy it was no real or lasting sorrow to part from the father whose presence in the home did not after all bring brightness and joy.

Surely Mrs. Snowflake's words about the kind father whom it had ever been her desire to teach Daisy to love did not concern an imaginary being? No; somewhere in the past stands the man, the loving husband and tender father, about whom Daisy hears so much to-day. What can have changed him? Alas! the old story of yielding to secret sin. The almost sudden death of his firstborn—a little boy of three in whom all his affections were centred—brought to Mr. Snowflake a sorrow which he sought to remove by forgetfulness, unmindful of the promises of needful help and strength with One—the "God of consolation." The trouble, which might have been fraught with great blessing to him, leading him to thought and prayer and greater desire after a holy life, hardened him. In his hardness

of heart and rebellion against the will of God he took to secret drinking as his only solace.

Almost heart-broken when she made the discovery, Mrs. Snowflake's one thought was to hide the fact from her friends and neighbours. Only Betsy Trueman was in the secret ; and this was owing to a scene of which she was an eye-witness a few months before the birth of Daisy, when, while speaking with Mrs. Snowflake, her husband, more than usually under the influence of drink, came into the room. "One of his bad attacks, not quite well to-day," said the gentle wife sweetly, as, having led her husband out of the room, she returned to Betsy after some few minutes' absence. "Yes, ma'am," said Betsy quietly ; but the sorrow upon her face revealed the fact that she at least could not be deceived as to the nature of the attack.

Vowing that he would never love another child, Mr. Snowflake steeled his heart against little Daisy, and from the first evinced a strong dislike towards her. Very prayerfully and gently Mrs. Snowflake met all that was unkind in her husband's treatment of herself or of Daisy. Had

he not, when he won her affections years gone by, been all that a young girl could honour and love? In the early married days could any one have been more considerate, more kind, more tender? And would he not be just as loving, true, and kind to-day but for the master passion which overruled his life? Hence, even in her saddest hours, Mrs. Snowflake only felt bitterness in her heart for *the cause* of the change in her husband. For *him* as he had used to be, for *him* as he should be again when delivered from the cruel thralldom of an evil appetite, she still had love and unerring devotion. And thus, as she watched him as he walked away from his home that day towards the village station,—whither she would have accompanied him had he allowed her,—her heart for the first time almost misgave her, and she felt the utter desolation of being deprived by a living death of the one upon whom in her wifely devotion she had always yearned to lean.

She took Daisy in her arms, and sitting down almost hopelessly, she wept without restraint.

“You are all I have now, Daisy, my precious one!” she said with passionate energy.

"Is the Lord Jesus dead, mamma?" asked Daisy in a hushed whisper. She was awed by her mother's grief, and evidently felt the cause was something far greater than the going from home of her father.

Her question brought Mrs. Snowflake to herself. Perhaps there flashed through her mind at that moment the promise of Psalm ix. 10: "They that know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." Anyway her tears were very quickly chased away, and she said as she kissed Daisy's frightened little face,—

"Oh no, Daisy darling, the Lord Jesus is just what He has always been to me, and I am going to trust Him more than ever. He will never forsake them that seek Him."

Half an hour afterwards and Daisy was as bright as usual; but it took many days and weeks before Mrs. Snowflake recovered her usual spirits, and from the hour her husband left her her bodily strength seemed visibly to wane.

Three years passed away, almost without any event worthy of chronicle. Mrs. Snowflake taught

Daisy as much as she felt it wise for her to learn, and that meant very little, as she believed that it was better to restrain the thought of her active brain rather than to quicken it. At first there was the daily anxiety of looking out for a letter from her husband; but when twelve months had passed without hearing anything, she unconsciously gave up expecting to do so. About two years after his departure, Mr. Snowflake did write a few matter-of-fact lines, just to tell his wife that he was living; as yet he had not been successful, although he had made "many ventures." No mention was made of Daisy. No address was given. The letter bore the postmark of Canada.

Another twelve months (the last of the three years since her husband left), and Mrs. Snowflake became so weak and ailing that Betsy Trueman was engaged to come for a month or two, and attend to her, leaving the servant a little more free to take Daisy for her daily walks.

"The end is coming sooner than I anticipated, Betsy," said Mrs. Snowflake, three weeks after her faithful friend and nurse came to be with her;

"I am quite ready to go. I am *so tired* and soul-weary. It is only for Daisy's sake that I sorrow, but even she will be better and brighter in the home to which she is to go than she can be here with me, while I am so very weak."

"Where is Miss Daisy going to, ma'am?" asked Betsy, biting the knot off her cotton: the thing was unnecessary, for she needed it there, but it gave her an opportunity of screwing up her eyes and so getting rid of two tears which had come unbidden.

"To my only sister's home," said Mrs. Snowflake. "There is a little girl there some few months younger than my Daisy, and I think she will be a very good companion for my darling. She is lively and clever, an only child, so a little spoilt perhaps" (it never occurred to Mrs. Snowflake that Daisy, because an only child, shared the same chance of being spoilt), "but her mother is a kind-hearted, sensible woman!"

"Has she ever been in these parts, ma'am?" asked Betsy after a moment's pause.

"Only once," replied Mrs. Snowflake. "We had not met for many years—I had married against my

friends' wishes, and this entirely separated me from them. They had never seen Mr. Snowflake, and until he left me they took no notice of us. They spent a month with me—Mrs. Brown and Linda—the year my husband left me, and last summer Daisy and I stayed five weeks with them. My sister's husband is a clergyman, and he has a living in Hertfordshire. It is a pretty country parish, and they believe the neighbourhood to be very healthy. They keep a cow and a pony. Daisy was delighted with her visit, and she knows that some day she is likely to live with them. She is not unprovided for, as my present income will be hers."

The "some day" was nearer than any one expected. That very night Mrs. Snowflake awoke Betsy Trueman: "Wake my little Daisy," she said, speaking with great difficulty, "I feel very, very ill."

Daisy was soon awake, staring at her mother with tearful eyes, watching her laboured breathing. The servant was sent off for the doctor, who lived quite near. In a few minutes Mrs. Snowflake made the effort to speak: "Daisy darling, I am going home—to the home you and I have so often

talked of—to Heaven. You will come to me some day—and your father—tell him when you see him how I have prayed to meet him—there.”

Mrs. Snowflake stopped here and closed her eyes. Daisy thought she was fainting, but Betsy felt sure she was silently praying, so would not disturb her.

In a moment she went on again :

“You must promise me not to fret, darling, for I shall be so happy and bright, and *quite well* in our beautiful home, with the Lord Jesus. Whenever you feel sad, try and remember to thank the Lord Jesus for taking me to be where He is, and then you will forget your sadness and feel glad instead.”

Another pause; then again she spoke: her voice grew fainter and fainter, but the words were distinctly spoken :

“Daisy, you will remember your promise—never to take strong drink. If people ask you why, tell them it was your own mother’s wish.”

A sob was Daisy’s only answer.

“Now kiss me, darling,” said Mrs. Snowflake, attempting to raise herself on her pillows but falling back powerless, “God bless and keep you,

my precious little sunbeam—you have been mother's comfort and joy ever since God gave you to me—I give—you—now—back—again—to Him—Betsy—dear—friend, thank—you—for your—faithful care—Daisy—*my* Daisy—Saviour—Jesus—Thou—hast—forgiven a—poor—sinner—and—Thou—art here—to—take—me—home—Oh! the glorious—light—little Daisy, come to mother—come!”

The dying woman threw out her arms, and a radiant smile lit up her face as she fixed her eyes upon the ceiling. There was perfect silence for a moment, then the front door closed upon the doctor, who had entered. Hastily he ascended the stairs and came into the sick room.

Nothing but the sound of Daisy's passionate weeping and of Betsy's suppressed sobs.

Daisy's mother was with God.

II.

DAISY'S NEW HOME.

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II.

DAISY'S NEW HOME.

"The forest oak, which shades
The sultry troops in many a toilsome march,
Once an unheeded acorn lay."

WHEN the first outburst of grief was over, Daisy was really very happy in her new home. It was delightful to have a companion about her own age, and although Linda's mirth and merry ways sometimes grated upon her subdued spirits, as time went on she grew accustomed to all this, and her own laugh was often quite as loud and merry as her cousin's.

When Daisy had first come to the Rectory her uncle had noticed that she never touched the wine which Linda had been taught to regard as the Sunday treat at dessert. The first day of Daisy's refusing it, Mr. Brown had questioned her as to the reason.

"I promised poor mamma," said Daisy, with

tear-filled eyes, "that I would never touch anything that could make people tipsy. I hope when I see her in heaven to be able to look into her face and tell her I have kept my promise." Daisy had spoken in a low voice, but each word was distinctly uttered, and there was a ring in her tone which was very touching.

Mr. Brown and Miss Humphreys the governess had tears in their eyes ; but Linda tossed her head playfully and emptied at one draught her glass of sherry.

"It was surely a very strange promise to extract from one so young," said Mrs. Brown, sipping a glass of port, "but no doubt your mother had her own reasons."

"I am sure she had," said Daisy, thoughtfully, "but she did not tell me exactly. Only I know that while so many people *do* grow too fond of drink, even if my dear mother had not wished it I never, never could have enjoyed it myself! Uncle," she added very gently, "why do *you* take it? Is there no one of all your people too fond of it?" and Daisy looked up wistfully into her uncle's face.

Mr. Brown coughed a little and emptied his glass before he answered, then he said, not untenderly,—

“Every one has a right to his own opinion upon this subject, Daisy. I *have* parishioners who do take it too freely, but I do not feel that that fact compels me to give it up.”

Daisy burst into tears. She felt reproved.

“If you please, uncle, I am *so* sorry to have asked you, only—only ——”

“Well, speak out,” said Mr. Brown, gently, feeling really sorry for his little niece’s confusion.

“Well—please—I only meant—if not taking it *could* help them to give it up, wouldn’t you be *very* sorry afterwards not to have done something?”

Mr. Brown looked very thoughtful, and was busy for a moment or two with his fruit. Then he said, “I shall have to think about this, Daisy, and so will Linda and mamma. Miss Humphreys never takes anything, you see; she thinks it does not agree with her.”

The conversation was then changed. Daisy’s heart was a little heavy, but somehow her mother

felt very near to her, as she always did when she had done anything which she knew would please her.

Daisy had been in her new home about fifteen months at the time our story opens.

They had had a splendid play together that day of the funeral passing. It was a whole holiday, in honour of its being Mr. and Mrs. Brown's wedding day. Miss Humphreys had gone to London until the following morning, so the two children had been even more free than usual.

"Do you not think we might have a ride this afternoon?" said Daisy, suddenly awakening from the thoughts which the passing of the funeral had brought to her. "Gipsy had a rest all yesterday; shall we go and ask uncle?"

"I would rather play about or stay with mamma; but you may go, Daisy, if you will be satisfied with a scamper round the paddock, because then you will not want any one to be with you," said Linda decidedly.

Daisy ran to her uncle's study to gain the necessary permission. She entered, after giving a gentle knock, and crept in softly, thinking Mr.

Brown might be resting. But he was sitting at his desk, his head bowed upon his hands, and when he looked up hastily as Daisy entered, there were traces of tears upon his face.

Instinctively Daisy paused. Her own grief was too fresh upon her memory to allow her to force herself upon any one in trouble. She knew in those never-to-be-forgotten days of anguish when her mother died, that better than anything else she liked being alone. Fearing her uncle was in deep sorrow, she turned as if to flee, but he called her back.

"What is it, little Daisy?" he said very gently, clearing his throat and brushing his pocket-handkerchief hastily over his face.

"Only about the pony, uncle," Daisy said timidly; she was not at all afraid of her uncle, but the feeling that something was making him unhappy made her a little shy.

Then she explained how Linda wished to be with her mamma, so might she go alone for a ride in the paddock?

"You may go alone as far as that goes," said Mr. Brown, "but Linda must not worry her

mamma ; she is not quite well this afternoon, and must not be disturbed. Send Linda to me, dear, and run and get your habit skirt on."

Linda was soon with her father in his study, and very quickly understood that "mamma had one of her bad headaches," and must be kept quite to herself. "If you would like a long walk with me," said Mr. Brown, after a pause in which he had been looking at his watch and thinking, "you may come with me now ; I have some distance to go—as far as the Manor Farm ; Daisy will have her ride, and then she can come and amuse herself in the schoolroom until we return."

So it was settled. Mr. Brown assisted his little niece to get upon Gipsy's back. Daisy sat the pony well, although her only experience in riding before she came to live with her aunt had been what she had gained in the month's visit the previous summer. She gathered the reins into her hands as if she were perfectly accustomed to her position, and with a bright "Good-bye, uncle ; good-bye, Linda," she started off into a trot round the paddock. John Turner the groom had instructions from his master not to be far away, and

Daisy had been told to go to the schoolroom when she had finished her ride, and on no account to disturb her aunt.

Would she ever be tired of riding Gipsy round and round that large paddock? Daisy thought not. She made up her mind that if Gipsy continued to enjoy it as much as she did, she would ride away until her uncle and Linda returned from their walk. But even the keenest pleasures may grow wearisome. Daisy felt really tired of the mere fact of going round and round the same way before she had been there half an hour. She tried to vary it by turning back and so getting a slight change from going always the one way. Then she crossed from side to side, threading her way through the apple trees which stood at uncertain distances down the centre. But Gipsy did not quite care for this plan, as the grass was rather long at his feet, and the boughs of the trees made progress a little difficult.

"Anything wanted, miss?" asked John Turner, as for the third or fourth time he came round from the stables to see how the young lady was getting on.

"I think I will go in now," said Daisy; "I am very hot and a little tired, and I think Gipsy has had enough of it." So saying, she sprang lightly into Turner's arms, and then on to the ground, and after kissing Gipsy's neck in farewell, tripped away into the house. Slipping her skirt off in the very pretty bed-room which she shared with Linda (their two little beds standing at either end of the wall which faced the bow window), Daisy put away her things and went down to the schoolroom on tip-toe, remembering her uncle's injunction not to disturb her aunt. Before she had, however, closed the schoolroom door, she thought she heard her aunt calling her. Daisy crept to the foot of the stairs and listened. There was certainly some one calling her, but it was not quite her aunt's voice. Daisy ran upstairs softly, and listened outside her aunt's bed-room door.

"Daisy, I say, Daisy," said a voice from within.

"Yes, aunt," answered Daisy, trying to turn the handle and open the door; but the door was locked.

"Do you want me, aunt?" she asked, as there was a pause, and no sound came, although she

was expecting to hear the lock turn and to see the door open.

"Of course I do, or why should I call you?" replied her aunt from within.

"Please unfasten the door, then, auntie," said Daisy at once.

"It is locked on the outside, child," cried out Mrs. Brown, coughing as she did so. "Your uncle must have turned the key in mistake."

"Oh yes, I see it is here," said Daisy, observing for the first time that the key was on the outside of the door. She turned it as she spoke. It went very easily. Mrs. Brown opened the door as she did so, pushed her on one side, and half ran, half stumbled down stairs. Daisy stood for a moment electrified; the next she followed her aunt, and found her in her uncle's study.

"I want to find your uncle's keys," said Mrs. Brown, keeping a scented pocket-handkerchief up to her face, which was very much flushed; "I feel so dreadfully bad and must have some brandy."

"Oh! I know where uncle's keys are!" said Daisy, running to the other side of the room, where,

behind a curtain in a convenient niche, the Rector's study coat and an overcoat were hanging. "I heard them shake," continued Daisy, "in uncle's pocket as he changed his coat before going out;" and the next moment she produced the keys.

"Those are they," said Mrs. Brown. And Daisy thought that she looked as happy as if they had been lost for a long while and only just now found; and as she said it, she sprang towards them, nearly stumbling over a hassock in her eagerness to get them into her possession.

"You must run away now," said Mrs. Brown, pushing Daisy not very gently towards the door.

Daisy obeyed without a word; something in her aunt's look and manner startled her.

Instead of going into the schoolroom, Daisy ran into the pantry to find the housemaid.

"Margaret, Margaret," she called gently; and Margaret, with her work in her hand, came to her from the kitchen, where she had been sitting in a very pleasant porch which led into the kitchen garden.

"Will you go to auntie, please? I am

afraid something's the matter ; she is in uncle's study."

Margaret only stopped to put down her work, then she ran hurriedly upstairs, while Daisy crept back to the schoolroom. Margaret went into her master's study, but saw no one. Then she went into the morning-room, and next into the dining-room. Finding no one in either room, she went upstairs to her mistress's bed-room : the door was closed and fastened from within.

"Who is there?" asked Mrs. Brown ; and her voice sounded as if she had been awoke from sleep.

"Is there anything you want, ma'am?" said Margaret.

"No, thank you, only keep the house quiet; I have a wretched headache," was the reply, given in weary tones. Margaret returned to her work in the kitchen porch, while Daisy stayed on in the schoolroom, watching for the return of her uncle and Linda, and when she grew tired of this, settling herself in the arm-chair with pencil and paper.

It was nearly half-past six o'clock before they came in. Tea was on the table in the dining-

room. Daisy had fallen fast asleep in her arm-chair. The day had been very hot, and her ride had tired her. She had amused herself for some time with writing, making up little pieces of poetry which were half in the style of a hymn, half as a nursery rhyme. She had always had the gift, and her mother had praised her for her attempts, especially if the thoughts she expressed were worth remembering. To-day, Daisy had been thinking of something her dear mother had taught her—about the influence even a child possessed for good or for evil, and out of this memory of her mother's teaching had grown the three crude verses which Mr. Brown found scribbled on a piece of paper lying with the pencil upon Daisy's knee. He knew his little niece's gift well enough. He smiled upon the sleeping child as he read :

“ Dropping words of kindness,
Scattering thoughts of love,
Carrying to the weary
A message from above.

“ Dropping words of discord,
Scattering thoughts unkind,
Leaving with the tired-out
Unrest and aching mind.

“ Lord Jesus, help a little girl,
To do the thing that's right,
Let her scatter what is lovely,
And be a sunbeam bright.”

It was quite evident that Daisy had gone to sleep over the last line.

Mr. Brown awakened her by giving her a very warm kiss.

“ Oh! uncle,” said Daisy, starting up and rubbing her eyes, “ have you got your keys ? ”

“ My keys, child ? why, you are dreaming,” said Mr. Brown, laughing. “ Come in to tea and wake up ! ”

Daisy went in to tea, and noticed her uncle's keys in the side-board cupboard. Thinking it would be her fault if they were not where he usually kept them,—for her aunt had her own keys, and Daisy wondered why she had wanted these, and then she wondered why she had not wondered before,—Daisy spent the moment or two which elapsed between going into the dining-room and her uncle following her there, in taking the keys from the cupboard and putting them on Mr. Brown's study table. She had no intention in doing this

of preventing the asking of any question concerning them ; her only thought was to save her uncle trouble. He would be sure to see them on his table and replace them in the pocket from which Daisy had taken them.

Hence it happened that Daisy was not asked to give any explanation about the keys. Mrs. Brown remained in her room, and the children were told to keep as quiet as possible for the rest of the evening, lest they might awaken her from the sleep into which she had fallen.

The next morning, at breakfast time, Mr. Brown told the two girls that he was going to send them both away to the Manor Farm for a week's visit, —an announcement which greatly delighted the children, although Linda's pleasure was somewhat spoiled by the fact that she was not allowed to say good-bye to her mother. Mr. Brown promised to take a message, but said "mamma was too unwell to be disturbed." They left early in the afternoon under Miss Humphreys' care.

III.

DIFFICULTIES.

CHAPTER III.

DIFFICULTIES.

“ Though plunged in ills and exercised in care,
Yet never let the noble mind despair ! ”

FROM the very first hour that Daisy had become an inmate of Dovedale Rectory, Mrs. Brown had shown her the greatest kindness and affection.

“ Remember, my darling, I am to be a mother to you now,” she had whispered tenderly as she gathered the motherless girl within her arms the day of her arrival. “ You must be my second daughter, and love me as Linda does ; ” and then Mrs. Brown had wept silently, wondering, perhaps, if any one’s arms would gather *her* little girl within their folding if *she* were motherless.

But in spite of her great kindness and often-expressed devotion, Daisy had not the same deep

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regard for her aunt that she had for her uncle. For him she conceived a passionate affection; all the pent-up love of her childish heart for the father who had chilled her to coldness seemed suddenly to break loose and flow out towards Mr. Brown. To do anything for him, however trivial, to win a smile of thanks or a word of commendation,—this was Daisy's greatest joy in life. And since the day when she had discovered her uncle weeping in his study, Daisy had a new thought and feeling in her girlish heart,—the yearning to minister comfort to him.

The stay at the Manor Farm had been a very happy one. It had lasted for a month instead of a week; and after this came a visit to the sea-side, and a return to Dovedale Rectory just in time to see the country in its lovely autumn garb. Winter passed away with a calmly happy and uneventful life as far as the two girls at the Rectory were concerned. Daisy's twelfth birthday had brought her gifts from her uncle and aunt, Linda and Miss Humphreys, with a letter from dear old Betsy Trueman, who had lately removed to a very pretty and comfortable little

almshouse in the village where Daisy had lived with her mother.

It was summer again, a warm July afternoon, the heat less excessive than it had been for some days, on account of the sun being darkened from time to time by gathering clouds; Daisy and Linda were sitting with their books in the summer-house when Miss Humphreys came to them.

"Which of you two would like a walk in the village with me this afternoon?" she said, as she sat down in a chair beside them. She held some roses in her hand, which she had just been gathering, and as she spoke she began to re-arrange them.

"It is so awfully hot," said Linda with a sigh; and she looked at the unfinished story-book which she held in her hand.

"It is *exceedingly* hot," said Miss Humphreys, gently. "Linda dear," she added, "do not forget that the word *awful* is not to be used in the sense you use it by a young lady. You know what an objection your papa has to it!"

Linda put her head on one side and looked

penitent. She was deeply attached to her governess, and would bear a reproof from her with an unruffled temper; but even while her look pleaded sorrow, her lips proved her heart to be wayward:

"I do think," she said, "that the plough-boys have an advantage over us. They may say 'awful' and 'jolly,' and use the most lovely big words to express their meanings, and no one tells them it is——"

"Unladylike?" interrupted Miss Humphreys, smiling. "No, Linda, no one would be likely to tell them that; but I am inclined to think that even a plough-boy with a gentle heart, however uneducated his accent, would be a little careful of the words he used. Why, do you ever remember hearing Joe Scrivens speak as you think he, being a plough-boy, would be privileged to speak?"

"No, I have never noticed him use these words," said Linda, thoughtfully; "but you know what I say is this, that if he *did* use them, there would be no one to scold him for so doing."

Joe Scrivens was a general favourite at the Rectory. The son of a much-respected parishioner, Mr. Brown had engaged him when he was quite

a little boy to help in the cleaning of knives and boots during the hours in which he was not at school, meaning eventually to train him for his groom. But Joe had always had an ambition to follow the plough, and Farmer Smith had had an ambition to have Joe as soon as he was old enough. He knew the boy's antecedents. His father had always worked on the farm, and his grandfather had been a faithful servant to Farmer Smith's father. Mr. Brown soon saw how matters would naturally end if he did not interfere; Joe would be taken on to the farm as soon as he was of an age likely to be useful, and by-and-bye he would take his father's place. It seemed to him, as a man of honour, that it was only *just* to let Farmer Smith have Joe; he considered he had a right to him in virtue of the association of Joe's family for so many years with Parrot Farm.

Joe had therefore in due time left the Rectory; but no one there had lost their interest in him, and he was always made welcome to the stables or kitchen when he "looked round of a night," to inquire after the master and mistress and the young ladies; while occasionally the

gardener would ask him for an hour or two's assistance in weeding in the long summer evenings when his work was over. Miss Humphreys had quoted Joe in her conversation with Linda as a good answer to her young pupil's argument.

"Linda dear, your argument will not bear the light," said Miss Humphreys after Linda's acknowledgment that she had never heard Joe make use of the expressions she had designated "lovely;" and she added, "Words are, or should be, the utterance of our heart-thoughts; and if those thoughts come from a home of *truth*, they must be clothed in language suitable to truth, and *exaggerated* language could never be this. But come, my darling girl," she continued, playfully touching Linda's cheek with the flowers she held in her hand, "I had no wish to give you one of my lectures out of school, for I have no time to spare. Amongst other things, I have as much as I can get through in the village to be back in good time for tea, and there is to be a drive out to the Manor Farm this evening. Now, dears, which of you will go with me? I am sorry I cannot invite you both, but three is one too many in the homes we shall

be visiting, so one of you must stay at home and amuse yourself, which will not be a *very* difficult matter, I know;" and Miss Humphreys glanced meaningly at the books Daisy and Linda had been so intent upon reading when she joined them a few minutes ago.

"Let Daisy go! She loves visiting dear old women, kissing the babies, and hearing all about how Johnny got through the measles, and when Sarah got out of the whooping cough," said Linda, playfully.

"Nonsense, Linda! do not be so wild," said Miss Humphreys, reprovingly; "young girls should not make fun of solemn things!"

"But how *can* I help it?" said Linda, laughing; "if people *will* be funny, they must expect to be laughed at. You know, you dear old Humphreys-thing, that *you* smiled in your pocket-handkerchief over *dear* old Mrs. Martin's bad leg, when she told you that nothing did it so much good as a cup of good strong tea and a pinch of snuff! You pretended not to understand, you know you did, and asked her if she rubbed the snuff and the tea upon her poor leg together or separately, while

all the time she was holding out her hand for the sixpence she meant you to give her!"

Miss Humphreys laughed consciously. Linda certainly was wonderfully quick to notice and to remember—what a splendid woman she would make by-and-bye! This was always Miss Humphreys' inward comment over her promising pupil. She had taken most kindly to Daisy, but Linda had by far the larger share of her heart. She had secured her place in the kind governess's heart before the coming of Daisy; this perhaps was the chief reason for the difference of her feelings towards them.

"If Daisy would like to come with me I shall be pleased to have her," said Miss Humphreys, quietly. "Daisy can always help me in a way in which *you* cannot, Linda," she continued with a smile, which was intended as a kindly setting-down to her pet pupil. "Daisy always is ready to sing a hymn in the cottages, and I am sure it helps some of the invalids very much!"

"You see if you cannot take us both with you at any time, it is no good our learning a duet," said Linda, in a most provokingly cool tone. "We

might get 'Jack and Jill' arranged for two, if we had a chance of singing it together!" and Linda made a very comical grimace.

Miss Humphreys tried to look indignant. Shaking her head at Linda she turned to Daisy, and desired her to get her walking things on.

"Please may I stay at home?" said Daisy, beseechingly; "uncle has given me his gloves to mend, and I do so want to have them ready for him by tea-time!"

"That settles it, then," said Linda, really delighted to go with Miss Humphreys, although she had pretended otherwise; and she ran away to get her things on.

Miss Humphreys gave Daisy a kiss, and said she was rejoiced to find her so industrious. In a few minutes Daisy had put her book on one side and was hard at work upon the gloves; Miss Humphreys and Linda had started; Mr. Brown was out for the afternoon; and Mrs. Brown had not been seen since the morning, having one of her bad headaches.

Daisy had been by herself about half-an-hour when she saw Mrs. Brown coming towards the

summer-house. She was dressed in a bed-room wrapper, and her head was bound round with a towel, such as Daisy had often seen her mother wear when suffering from headache. She carried a shawl upon her arm, as if ready to put on did she require it. Daisy was a little startled to see her come into the garden thus.

"Daisy darling, I want you to do something for me," said her aunt, sitting down beside her and leaning her flushed cheek on Daisy's shoulder, so that the young girl had no view of her face while she was speaking. "I want you to be a very good girl and go down to the village for me for some medicine which I am obliged to take sometimes; indeed, it is the only kind which does me good. I do not like to vex your uncle about it. He does not hold with homœopathy—how could he, with two brothers who are physicians?—but *I* do, for I find it does me good. Now the only person to keep the drug I want is old Mrs. Hawkins, who lives by the boat-house——"

"Auntie," interrupted Daisy, and her tone was one of great surprise, "you do not mean that public-house, where uncle never lets us go near

because of the rude people who are drinking there ? ”

“ No, I do not mean the public-house itself,” said Mrs. Brown, speaking slowly. “ Unfortunately Mrs. Hawkins’ husband *has* something to do with that, which, of course, is a great pity, they are *far* too respectable for such a—distressing business ; but Mrs. Hawkins has nothing to do with this, and I only want you to go to her private door and take this little note. She expects me to send my own bottle, so I have put it in this basket. You will go for me, dear, will you not ? I know how you love to be useful, living for Him whom your sainted mother is now with in heaven ; ” and Mrs. Brown buried her face in her pocket-handkerchief.

Whether it was the mention of her mother or the thought of “ being useful ” we cannot say, but Daisy felt quite suddenly most eager to go for her auntie’s medicine. She very quickly rose from her seat, and went to her room to put on her walking things, Mrs. Brown following her and talking excitedly.

“ You need not say anything about it to your

uncle," said Mrs. Brown, as she gave Daisy the basket which contained the bottle.

"If he asks me I *must* tell him," said Daisy, looking straight up into her aunt's face. "I know you would not like me to deceive him ; and I could not do it if you would."

"Of course not, my darling," said Mrs. Brown hurriedly ; "I was only wishing you not to annoy him needlessly ; he knows I take the medicine, and, if at home, he would get it for me himself ; but it vexes him a little to think I will have anything to do with homœopathy."

"Then I will not vex uncle if I can possibly help it," said Daisy very sweetly, her loyal heart pained for the moment at the thought of inflicting upon one whom she so dearly loved an anxiety which any one else would spare him.

Mrs. Brown called her "her own sweet darling," "the comfort of her life," and names equally full of tenderness ; and Daisy hastened away, not altogether caring for the lavish praise.

Her nearest way would have been straight through the village, Mrs. Hawkins' house standing at the far end against the bridge which

crossed the river. But Daisy was not quite happy about her errand, and she thought she would not go where she was likely to encounter Miss Humphreys and Linda and be asked questions; nor would she care to be watched to the door by any of the village people, for they might imagine she had gone, after all, for something from the public-house. Daisy's cheeks tingled with the thought. A path across the fields from the road at the bottom of the paddock would bring her out quite close to the boat-house, and Mrs. Hawkins lived within a minute's walk from that spot, so thither Daisy went.

It was after all a sultry afternoon, although less so than it had been for some days. Daisy felt the heat, but her large sun-hat well shaded her, and her summer dress was very light and comfortable. She had just reached the gate, after crossing the field, and in another minute would have come to the house she was bound for, when, coming towards the gate from the village side, was Joe Scrivens.

Joe held the gate open for her as he touched his cap, his sun-burnt, honest face beaming with pleasure.

"Nice day, miss," he said respectfully. "Be you looking for Miss Linda and Miss Humphreys? I saw them go into Mother Clarke's only two minutes ago."

"No, I am out on an errand for my aunt, thank you, Joe," said Daisy; and she felt the colour come into her cheeks. (Oh! how she wished at that moment that the medicine was not kept by a woman whose husband had anything to do with a public-house!) "How are the white rabbits, Joe?" she asked as she prepared to move on.

"Quite well, miss, thank you," said Joe in a sprightly tone; then he touched his cap again, passed through the gate, and went on; and Daisy stooped to gather a piece of moss which carpeted the ground immediately at her feet—she had been standing on a spot from which a tree had been cut down two or three years ago—just to give Joe time to get further out of sight before she turned towards the door of Mrs. Hawkins' private house.

Daisy hoped that Joe, with his usual good manners, would walk steadily on, and not look back. This was really her only chance, as Joe had good eyesight, and the path across the field was

so straight that if he did happen to look back, he would have no difficulty in watching her movements.

While Daisy was still lingering over the moss, a short, stout-looking woman with a very red face appeared at the door of the house to which Daisy was going. She knew this must be Mrs. Hawkins, although she had never before spoken to her. Mrs. Hawkins did not come to church. The Rector believed that she and her husband attended a little chapel built by the Primitive Methodists in the next village ; many of his parishioners did go there, and the Rector was large-hearted enough to be very glad, for he felt sure that the simple and earnest teaching of these good people would be of more service to some of these unlettered villagers than his own preaching could ever be. He knew he tried to put things plainly, but, after all, the life of the local preacher came nearer to the life and because of that to the heart of some people than his own did. No, good Churchman that he was, he still acknowledged that there were some who but for the Dissenters would (as far at least as his own parish was concerned, and he was too

wise a man to make himself responsible for other people's parishes) never be reached at all. So the Rector always drew comfort for his very tender heart when a parishioner could not be numbered amongst his congregation by hoping that he or she, as the case might be, was an earnest follower of the Methodists.

If Mrs. Hawkins were a specimen of the earnest following, it is to be feared that the good Rector was often deceived in his hopes, for she, poor woman, not unfrequently boasted that she had never darkened village church or Methodist chapel by her presence since a certain occasion some thirty-five years ago ; that occasion having proved once too often, she was not likely ever to go again. As the occasion in question had reference to her wedding-day, it did not speak very hopefully for the comfort and happiness of her married life.

This was the woman to whom Daisy Snowflake had been sent by her aunt.

"If you please, are you not Mrs. Hawkins?" said Daisy, timidly. She came up just as the good woman was shaking with a great deal of energy a very dirty table-cloth.

"Yes, miss, and what may you please to want with me?" said Mrs. Hawkins, putting on a very peculiar smile, one of the kind which appear to come on the face all ready made beforehand, and not like a genuine smile which comes as the dawning of the day, gradual at first, then growing into fuller light and noontide splendour, as gradually to fade away,—a perfect sunrise and sun-setting compressed into a moment.

"If you please, my aunt, Mrs. Brown, wants some more of your medicine," said Daisy, nervously; "I have brought the bottle for it and a note to say the exact kind."

Another ready-made smile and a look in addition which struck Daisy as being more unpleasant than even the smile itself.

"Certainly, my dear," said the woman, in very patronizing tones; "my drugs always have done your aunt a deal of good;" and Daisy thought she saw her wink to herself as she turned indoors.

She did not ask Daisy to come in, which was a great relief; but the moments seemed very long before she returned.

"Tell your aunt the medicine is prime stuff,"

said Mrs. Hawkins, as she gave the basket into Daisy's hands ; and she made a sound with her lips as if she were tasting the said medicine with keen personal relish and pleasure. "Good day, miss," she added ; and Daisy turned away and retraced her steps through the field.

Daisy had nearly reached the gate at the opposite end when she noticed Joe Scrivens leaning upon the palings by the side of it, with his back towards her, looking up and down the high-road which she would have to cross to get into the Rectory grounds.

"Are you waiting for some one, Joe ?" inquired Daisy, pleasantly, a little wondering to see the active fellow lolling in this listless attitude.

"I was waiting for you, miss," said Joe, turning round ; and Daisy saw there were traces of recent tears upon his face.

Joe in trouble ? How sorry her uncle would be ! That was Daisy's first thought. The next she wondered why he had not gone straight up to the Rectory to tell her uncle without troubling her about the matter.

Joe looked very shy, very awkward ; he took

his cap off and turned it round and round in his hands.

"What is it, Joe?" said Daisy, thinking just then of her basket and wishing to get home.

"Please, miss, forgive my boldness, but haven't you been fetching some medicines for the missus from Mother Hawkins' shop?"

"Yes, Joe, I have," said Daisy, with heightened colour; "but I think you take a liberty which my uncle would not like in asking me the question."

"Sure I beg pardon, miss, and I'm willing for you to think bad of me and all," said Joe, earnestly, "but I must deliver my conscience: Miss Daisy, but it's a shame that you should be let into trouble unawares!"

Daisy felt alarmed, but she tried to hide it by keeping very calm.

"What *can* you mean, Joe?" she asked, a little impatiently.

"Why this, miss," said Joe, coming a step nearer and speaking in a lower voice; his words came very hurriedly, for he saw what Daisy could not see, standing as she did with her back to the village,

that Miss Humphreys and Linda were within twenty yards of them; "I used to go that errand for the missus when I worked at the Rectory, until I found the medicine was *brandy*, and then I wouldn't stir a step to go again."

Joe touched his hat as he said it, and walked away, recrossing the field and thereby meeting Miss Humphreys and Linda, who stopped to speak to him, Daisy meanwhile hurrying homewards quite unconscious of the nearness of the others.

When once in the garden she ran quickly to her own room. Her face was scarlet, her heart was beating so quickly as almost to take away her breath. Hot and angry tears were in her eyes. She turned the key of her door, put the basket on the floor, and knelt down impulsively by her own little bed. The very attitude of kneeling was restful; but oh! the agony of the thought which Joe's words had brought to her.

In a moment the scene of a year ago had all come back,—the keys, her aunt's wild looks, her craving for *brandy*,—and as it is when a sudden light is thrown upon a darkened spot, things that before have passed unnoticed are as by a flash

revealed, so it was with Daisy in this moment of anguish.

She remembered the first time at the Rectory when they had discovered that she took no wine, the few words that had been spoken, followed later by quite a long talk, Mr. Brown saying that he was going to be a teetotaler, and Mrs. Brown was going to be one, too; so, of course, Linda would be; then Linda's playful objection that "she really couldn't, she loved champagne far too much to give it up." Then Daisy recalled some visitor's surprise in finding no stimulants upon the table, and Mr. Brown's reply, "We are all teetotalers, thanks to Daisy, but we keep it in the house for sickness;" while Mrs. Brown had said, as if almost angry, "I have given it up to please Mr. Brown, *not* because I consult my own wishes;" and Mr. Brown had looked troubled and quickly changed the conversation.

It was her uncle's troubled look which Daisy so well remembered now; and it was so like the look which his face wore when she found him in the study that afternoon before her aunt had asked for the keys—ah! what did *that* mean?

But, in spite of all, Joe must be mistaken ; the thought was too terrible to allow for a moment. Her aunt could never really care for *brandy*, and wish to get it unknown to her uncle. No ! Joe could not have meant it, and if he did, he was a wicked, ungrateful boy, putting thoughts into people's heads which they would never have of themselves ! and Daisy began to cry.

Then, suddenly, as the lifting off of a heavy, stifling cloud, there came to her heart this interpretation of Joe's meaning—"He had meant to warn her of the badness of Mother Hawkins (as he had called her). She sent brandy, or something like brandy, and called it a medicine, and so deceived people, and Joe, when he found her out, would not be taken in by the wicked old woman !"

Oh ! the relief of this thought. Daisy felt so guilty in having darkened for one moment the name of her kind aunt even in her heart, that she wept more sorely than before, and said aloud to herself,—

"Forgive me, my darling aunt, forgive me ! I was entrapped into wronging you. Oh ! the dreadfulness of the thought *if it had not been all a mistake !*"

IV.

WAS IT A MISTAKE?

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IV.

WAS IT A MISTAKE?

“Thinkst thou there are no serpents in the world
But those that slide along the grassy soil?”

AND all this time *the medicine* was in the basket and the basket was upon the floor in Daisy's room.

Daisy suddenly remembered this, and sprang from her knees, bathed her tear-stained face, smoothed her hair, and then hurriedly unlocked her door and went to her aunt's room.

Mrs. Brown opened the door the moment Daisy knocked. She was dressed as before, and still held her handkerchief up to her mouth.

“Thank you, my dearest, darling, lovey, ducky!” she said, as she eagerly seized the basket; “I always said you were an angel of mercy, Daisy, and you have proved it to-day—have proved it, have proved it—good-bye, good-bye. Ah! how

divine a thing it is to have a dutiful and loving niece!" and Mrs. Brown put her arms round Daisy's neck and tried to kiss her. We say *tried* advisedly, for it seemed as if the lips could not quite make up their minds to so close as to form the touch which is known by the name of a kiss. They *came near* to her cheeks, but their nearness lacked decision of purpose.

One moment—a moment of intense agony to Daisy, for sight, smell, touch, all combined to tell her the terrible fact that her aunt was not herself; something—if not drink, then something of like nature, had taken possession of her—one moment, and Daisy released herself from her aunt's embrace and fled.

Back to her room,—it was still vacant,—back to her knees, back to her doubts. Poor, poor Daisy! Alas! poor darling! you are not the only one thus to awake by some sudden shock to the knowledge of a bitter truth, that truth more awfully sad than death itself. You are not the only one who has sought to put the hideous fact away, pleading with fears and misgivings, "It is all a mistake—all a mistake;" and then, while taking

comfort from this thought, as one aroused from a dream in which it would be heaven to remain, the comfort has been torn to shreds, and the heart's hopeful utterance, "All a mistake—all a mistake!" has been changed into the bitter, bitter wail, "No mistake about it!"

Not the only one, Daisy. Every day there are souls thus tortured, every day there are some dying to the comfort of hope, and, in an agony of grief, losing themselves in the dark waters of despair.

Woe, woe for the cause of this ceaseless agony, this bitter, bitter grief,—as bitter to the one whom it engulfs to-day as it was to the friend over whose sorrows the heart now weeping for its own complaints has wept in tenderest sympathy!

Can it indeed be true that with this giant possibility of evil surrounding the home-life of the purest, the most refined and cultured, when temptation has been trifled with and appetite indulged,—can it indeed be true that those who name the name of Him who came to "destroy the works of the devil," while professedly believing in Him, can yet have fellowship with the unfruitful works of

darkness, and play with a viper, and teach their children to play with it too, which at any moment might turn round and give them the poisonous sting of death?

"O Lord, open *Thou* our eyes that we may behold the wondrous things out of Thy law."

Daisy felt to grow ten years older in those few moments as she knelt beside her bed. And now came to her the comfort, and with it the strength, of her dear mother's faithful teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ knew all about it, and He would take care of her and of *it*—the dark, dark secret. "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee." Blessed words brought to mind and heart by the awakening touch of a realized need.

Linda entered the room and found Daisy all ready for tea, sitting against the window looking thoughtful and unusually sad.

"We saw you, but you did not see us, Daisy," said Linda, throwing off her hat and sinking down upon her bed. "With all due reverence to dear Humphrey Dumphrey, it is *awfully* hot! There! I suppose my heart is not very sweet and clean and nice, or that naughty word could not come,

for I know it's very wicked, as I have been forbidden! I should have been up ten minutes or more ago, but papa kept me talking in his study. I wonder what *can* be the matter with mamma; he persists in keeping me out of her room, and I declare I am just pining for her!"

Try as much as she could, yet Daisy was unable to keep back her tears.

"Oh! you tender-hearted darling, I have made you troubled, I know I have, by reminding you that your dear mother has gone. *Please* forgive me, Day; it was very unfeeling of me, and I *hate* myself for it;" and Linda kissed her cousin very tenderly.

Daisy said nothing, but endeavoured to keep back her tears.

The tea-bell rang.

"I cannot come down," said Daisy, with a beseeching look into Linda's face; "please ask uncle and Miss Humphreys to excuse me: my head aches so badly I think I will go to bed."

"What! and miss the drive to the Manor Farm this evening?" exclaimed Linda. "Never, Day; it will do you a world of good!"

"I would rather go to bed," said Daisy ; and she put her hand up to her head weariedly.

"I believe you have had a sunstroke," said Linda, anxiously ; "what made you go down to the village this afternoon ?"

"I went for something for aunt," said Daisy ; and her voice was a little hesitating.

"Now, dear girls, are you not coming down to tea ?" and Miss Humphreys put her head into the room. Linda tried to hide Daisy in her grief, so said cheerfully,—

"In a minute or two, Miss Humphreys. Please pour out tea, so that it may get cool for us ;" and then as Miss Humphreys left the room she gave Daisy another kiss and said, "If you *really* prefer going to bed, dear, I will make it all right downstairs, only I am so sorry. Margaret shall bring your tea up to you."

Daisy's throbbing head and aching heart made her feel utterly wretched. It was a greater sorrow in a sense than the loss of her mother. For then she had many bright thoughts to come as the sunshine of love and comfort to disperse the darkness of her grief. The keenest pain now was the

thought of her uncle's sorrow, what he must have gone through: his silence on the subject; his clever manœuvring to get them out of the way when any special "yielding," took place; for now Daisy could see through the visit to the Manor Farm last year, and could account for one or two other hasty and unexpected flights which had taken place in the last twelve months. Poor uncle, poor aunt, poor everybody concerned!

A knock at the door, and Margaret entered with Daisy's tea. She had just put the tray down, prepared to have a little chat (for Margaret and Daisy were great friends), when a most terrible sound, as of some one in great fright, came from Mrs. Brown's room. Daisy sprang to her feet; Margaret turned pale. Another cry, and then another, and Daisy ran to the door. Margaret stopped her instantly. "You must not go, Miss Daisy, *indeed* you must not!" said she, putting her hand upon Daisy's arm. But Daisy shook it off and flew to her aunt's room.

"Daisy, Daisy! quick, quick!" said Mrs. Brown, seizing Daisy by the hand and drawing her into the room; "do you not see them—there, there they

are! Look, look, they are going to spring upon me. Oh! see how their tails are standing up! Rats, rats! rats, rats! Daisy child, save me, save me!" and Mrs. Brown tore her hair and beat upon her breast.

Poor Daisy was more than powerless, she was sick with terror, and felt faint and giddy. Margaret had gone down hastily to the dining-room, and had whispered to Mr. Brown, "Would he please go to the mistress? Miss Daisy was there."

With a terror-stricken face—for the opening of the door had admitted sounds which the shut door had kept out—Mr. Brown flew to his wife's room. Daisy was endeavouring to comfort and to assure her aunt, but Mrs. Brown was trying to keep away the imaginary rats by beating her hands in the air.

"Wife," said Mr. Brown, sternly, "calm yourself!" and as he spoke he placed a strong hand upon her shoulder. Mrs. Brown moved as if to avoid him, while her brow darkened. As she moved, her foot struck against something under the table near which she had been standing, and a half-empty

bottle rolled on the floor. Mr. Brown picked it up, and looked at it with horror.

"Who brought you this?" he asked sternly. Poor man! what tenderness could he have for that wild, desolate, inhuman-looking woman?

"I did, uncle," said Daisy, in most dejected tones.

"*You?* Go, Daisy, go away. Am I mad that I should have forgotten you were here?" and Mr. Brown struck his hand upon his forehead and wept.

Daisy obeyed, without one word of explanation about the brandy. The look, the manner, and the words of her uncle were additional sorrow to her already overburdened heart. But to obey him implicitly was surely her present duty: how could she stay to clear up herself in the very presence of this great woe? She had reached the door when her uncle called her back.

"Daisy, could you do something for me?" he whispered gently; and Daisy felt there was forgiveness in his tones. "Go to Dr. Allen's as quickly as you can, and tell him how your aunt is; say that I think we shall need help to-night. Not a word to any one else mind!"

A look of affection, sympathy, and gratitude for being trusted gathered into Daisy's eyes ; and her uncle read her thought and inwardly blessed her. She was gone without another word ; and while he stood beside his wife's bed,—having succeeded in getting her upon it,—he could see Daisy in the distance hurrying off to Dr. Allen's.

V.

DAISY'S DREAM.



V.

DAISY'S DREAM.

"Crosses grow anchors : bear as thou shouldst so
Thy cross, and that cross grows an anchor too."

AS Daisy reached the doctor's house he drove up in his brougham. Before he had alighted, Daisy had run to the opened window, saying breathlessly,—

"Uncle wants you to come to aunt; and, please, help may be required for her to-night."

The doctor's brow clouded.

"Get in, Daisy, while I leave an order at home, and we will drive back together," he said, getting out and assisting Daisy in. In a minute he returned, told the coachman where to drive to, and took his seat beside Daisy.

Daisy burst into tears as soon as they had started,

"My poor child!" said Dr. Allen tenderly, "how came you to know anything of this?"

"I heard her cries," said Daisy. "Oh! doctor, how *dreadful* it seems! Cannot you do something? Oh, please will you not give her some medicine that will take the longing away, doctor? Doctor, Linda knows nothing about it. Oh, do keep it from her."

"Do not be so over anxious, my poor child," said the doctor, greatly touched by Daisy's earnestness; "Mrs. Brown has had an attack like this before."

He thought to comfort Daisy by talking in this way, but Daisy could not be comforted yet. Involuntarily she exclaimed,—

"Oh! doctor, could *nobody* have prevented all this? I thought doctors could do anything. Were you never able to stop her?"

The question was innocently put, but it came home with a sting. *Had* there ever been a time in which he could have stopped this in the years gone by? Had not Mrs. Brown by his own advice drunk freely of port wine after Linda's birth? and had he not often helped himself, when paying his

professional visit, out of her decanter, praising the wine? and more than once had he not said carelessly, "The more of such good stuff the better"? Oh! why did he remember every word so clearly now as if he had spoken it but yesterday?

Why did her every look, her pleading in the first instance not to be forced to take what she objected to; his repeated order given with professional dignity calling forth a saddened smile, and a half-joking, half-earnest remark, "Well, doctor, if I *do* grow to love this, *you* will be responsible!"—why did all this rise before him to-day?

And why would the thought force itself upon him that this was not the only patient of his that had "gone wrong"? Why was he fated to have such woeful results grow out of innocent causes? Were they innocent causes after all? No drug in his surgery gifted with like power to injure would he ever think of prescribing to his patients for them to take when, where, and how *they* thought best, putting no limit to the time of their use, and leaving them to decide the quantity taken by their own taste and feeling!

Had he been *quite right* to order to his patients that which by any possibility could produce one such case as the one he was now on his way to visit?

Dr. Allen's meditations were interrupted by the stopping of his carriage at the Rectory. Mr. Brown was in the hall, his brow furrowed, his lips compressed, his face of ashy hue.

"This way, doctor," he said, as he grasped the doctor's hand; and he preceded him upstairs without another word.

Margaret was with her mistress, who now lay moaning upon the bed. She left her as her master and the doctor entered, and found her way to Daisy in the schoolroom. She wanted to see how poor Miss Snowflake was bearing this sad trouble, coming upon her, as it must have done, all unawares; and she thought Miss Daisy would like to know that Miss Humphreys and Miss Linda had been hurried away to the Manor Farm, where it had been arranged they should drive that evening, and Miss Linda quite in ignorance of her dear mamma's illness.

Daisy sat by the window looking the very

picture of sadness. Margaret's coming to her was quite an unlooked-for comfort; Daisy felt so sure that the faithful servant must know more about all this great trouble upstairs (she could not have given it a name had she wished to do so), and she was longing to be assured that it would soon be over.

"Margaret, do people die when they are ill like aunt is?" said Daisy, in an awed whisper, when Margaret had spoken of Linda's going to the Manor Farm.

"I suppose they do, miss," said Margaret in hushed tones; "but you need not take on so about your poor aunt. I have seen her in two bouts worse than this is, and she has pulled through."

"You know," said Daisy, crying, "I feel it is partly my fault, for I went for the brandy. Auntie sent a note, and said it was medicine. I did not a bit like going, because it was to Mrs. Hawkins', but what *could* I do?"

"It was not the brandy that did the real harm, I think," said Margaret, feeling it just to give Daisy's mind what relief she could. "It was

the eau-de-Cologne she had taken while master was out. I found three empty half-pint bottles, which have all been taken this afternoon."

"Eau-de-Cologne!" said Daisy, in tones of great surprise; "do people drink *that*?"

"They take almost anything and everything that has spirit in it, when they get like poor mistress," said Margaret, feelingly; "but there, Miss Daisy, I am sorry your heart has had to be burdened with this. I have tried to help the master keep it secret for these many years, and dear Miss Linda knows nothing of it. We are always hoping things will mend."

Daisy drew a deep breath.

"If only mamma were here," she said, plaintively,—"*she* would know exactly what to do!"

"It's a sore complaint," said Margaret, wiping her eyes, "when it really gets hold of any one. My dear father gave way when I was a little child, and nothing cured him until he became a Christian."

"But aunt *is* a Christian, Margaret," said Daisy, quickly; "you know what beautiful Bible lessons she gives us on Sunday—when she has not her headaches."

"Yes, Miss Daisy, I know all that," said Margaret, thoughtfully, "but——"

She did not finish the sentence. She would have found it very difficult to do so. Perhaps at that moment she was thinking, "There *are* Christians *and* Christians," and that her father belonged to the latter class.

"Do you not think that the doctor can cure my poor aunt?" said Daisy, after a pause. "I suppose," she added, "that he must have been trying to do so since he knew about it."

"*Trying* to do so!" said Margaret, and there was a tone of indignation in her voice. "It is my belief, Miss Daisy, that the doctor has always been too fond of his patient's port wine to wish to make a teetotaler of her, and that was her only chance!"

Margaret felt even as she said this that she was talking a little too freely with Daisy to be either quite right or quite wise. Before, however, she could say anything else the dressing-room bell rang violently several times, and she ran hastily away. Daisy waited anxiously to know what was wanted, but felt she must not attempt to

go and see. She opened the schoolroom door, and heard very distinctly her aunt's muffled cries. Every now and then the cries changed from being low, moaning, and wailing ; they became loud and defiant, angry and terror-stricken, and then would die away again.

"If aunt were not a woman and a *lady* I should think she was having that dreadful illness Betsy Trueman's nephew had once, which terrified her so much," thought Daisy ; "*delirium tremens* she called it ; he made that kind of noise, I think, and I know he was frightened of being eaten up by rats !"

Daisy unknowingly had in her thought taken possession of the very point which the cultured and refined plead to be their guarantee against excess of any kind in regard to the use of stimulants. Culture and refinement are supposed (by such) to deprive alcohol of the power which it possesses over the unlettered and unrefined. Whereas no one thus inclined to argue would contend that the fire burning in the grate of the nobleman's drawing-room had different properties from the fire which burnt on the poor man's hearth !

Supposing it were put this way, would it not be nearer the truth?—The cultured and refined, by their immense advantages of healthy, well-ventilated homes, of pursuits and recreations which absorb their thought and interest and occupy their time, are spared temptations which the less happily circumstanced are so likely to be surrounded with; but that alcohol has a different action upon the brain and physical constitution of a well-educated man from that which it has upon the brain and physical constitution of the poor and unlearned working-man. This argument is beyond the reach and therefore the support of all true science and philosophy.

But who does not know that an ounce of practical experience is worth a hundred-weight of theories? The most prejudiced, the most violently opposed to total abstinence, its worth and wisdom, yield their prejudice and their opposition to the all-powerful and all-proving influence of a case in their own immediate family, even while continuing to take from personal liking the stimulant so capable of producing evil. True, there are some who in blind and dogged unbelief

still vaunt their theories and push their facts into corners labelled "rare exceptions;" but such instances are less common to-day, when bishops and canons proclaim the teaching of the Bible, that "wine is a mocker,"—not the abuse of it but the thing itself,—than in those days when the most eloquent so-called Temperance reformers were gathered from the ranks of the reclaimed drunkards, the sum and substance of their pleading being that what had made *them* sober people might make others sober, with a not unfrequent postscript to their remarks in the form of an invective against the Christian Church looking on but not helping in the matter.

In those days *drunkenness* was the target at which all speakers aimed. To-day, with the larger wisdom of experience, strong wills and firm hands have placed another target up; and this represents the social habits and customs of the day in regard to that which in all cases, *without one exception*, precedes drunkenness, namely moderate drinking.

But these thoughts only concern Daisy's thoughts as an oak-tree concerns some little

acorn of the past in which at one time the large unfoldings of its life lay wrapt.

Daisy sat so still, that unconsciously she fell asleep. The screams from upstairs must have blended with her dreams. She thought she was in a strange place somewhere with her mother; they had had a long walk, and now they sat down to rest near a very large house which belonged to a nobleman. Daisy thought that she exclaimed to her mother,—

“Oh! mamma, we shall see the duke now; there is his carriage waiting for him; and look how many boxes they are stowing away in the van behind!”

Daisy's mother, she thought, became quite as interested as herself in watching the preparation for the duke's departure. By-and-by, when everything was ready, the servants who had been packing the luggage on the travelling van stood on one side, and Daisy strained her eyes to catch sight of the duke. And now four men appeared carrying something. It was the duke himself, and he looked so strange. He was half laughing and half crying, until they had lifted

him in his carriage, and then he began to sing.

Just as he did this, Daisy thought that the servants drew a covering over him very lightly so as to hide his head ; and they all appeared so confused and ashamed that she felt quite sorry for them.

Then she thought she turned to her mother in her dream and said,—

“ If he were not a duke, mamma, we should say he was tipsy.”

And Mrs. Snowflake had answered tearfully,—

“ Dukes are subject to the same complaints as poor men, Daisy, and there is only one Healer for them all.”

And Daisy asked, “ Who is the Healer, mamma ?” and the story of Naaman came to her mind, and she thought if only, like the little Syrian maid, she could tell the duke how to be cured. Then Daisy thought her mother paused as she asked, “ Who is the Healer ?” and looked at her a moment before she spoke. Then she said very tenderly,—

“ Is my Daisy able to understand, I wonder ? The Lord Jesus is the Healer.”

Daisy thought she threw her arms round her mother's neck and whispered,—

“Then everybody may be healed, for *He* is everywhere!”

Then her dream was disturbed, and she awoke startled.

It was only Margaret come to tell her it was very late, and she had better go to bed, after getting some supper which was spread out in the dining-room.

“And, Miss Daisy dear,” Margaret whispered, “there are two nurses come—the doctor telegraphed to London for them; and to-morrow you and Miss Linda and Miss Humphreys are going to the sea-side. How shall you like that?”

“It depends where it is,” said Daisy, with a yawn, too weary to quite take in the thought, and too sad at heart to find pleasure for herself while her uncle was in such sorrow.

VI.

NEW LESSONS.

VI.

NEW LESSONS.

“No service in itself is small,
None great, though earth it fill :
But that is small which seeks its own,
That great which does God’s will.”

MISS HUMPHREYS had a mother and sister staying on the east coast, so thither it was decided that she should take her two pupils. Linda’s grief was terrible. She tried every persuasion to induce the doctor to let her see her mother for only one minute ; but it was thought wiser to keep her away altogether than to give her the shock of beholding her mother in her present condition.

Saturday was the day of their departure from Dovedale Rectory. A long and somewhat tedious railway journey brought them to their destination about seven o’clock the same evening.

Daisy dearly loved the sea. In her first visit

to the sea-side after her mother's death she had felt greatly soothed and comforted while listening to the splashing of the waves. They seemed to talk to her about the far-off and mysterious, yet in a sense ever-present and understood heaven.

Daisy spoke little about these things, but once she had said to her uncle,—they had been sitting on the shore together,—“Heaven is a real place to me now, since mamma died; once it was only a dream.”

And Mr. Brown had said very tenderly, “And my Daisy knows the only way to Heaven—the way her mother trod?”

While Daisy had replied in lowered tones and with heightened colour, “Yes, uncle, the way of the Cross!”

And her uncle kissed her, and prayed inwardly that Daisy's life might ever be in keeping with this thought. And as he watched her gentleness with Linda, and her unselfishness at all times, Mr. Brown had said to himself again and again,—

“Yes, Daisy is right enough; I only wish I could feel as happy about Linda.”

One day the week following their arrival at

Baytown, Linda came to Daisy as she sat upon the shore letting (Linda said) the waves kiss the tips of her boots, and said with a very amused expression on her face,—

“What do you think? I have just been asked to go to a children’s service at the other end of the beach—as if we were little heathens and needed teaching our Bibles! I felt very indignant, although I laughed as I said, ‘Thank you very much, but you have made a mistake, I am a clergyman’s daughter!’ I did not wait to hear any more; I shall tell papa, and he will think it a great joke.”

The idea of a children’s service on the beach was not quite so familiar to the ordinary sea-side visitor in those days as it is now, so we may the more readily forgive Linda forming her own conclusions as to its object and nature.

“If it is meant to help us understand our Bible, I am sure I should be glad to go to it,” said Daisy, jumping up and shaking the sand off her pretty morning dress.

“But you are not going?” pleaded Linda, speaking interrogatively.

"Yes, I am," said Daisy, "if Miss Humphreys will give me permission ; and as she is sitting there yonder with her mother, I can ask her ;" and so saying Daisy started off with a good-bye nod to Linda.

"Stay,—are you *mad?*" called out Linda, greatly taken by surprise ; "pray be careful who you sit near, and do not tell them your uncle is a *clergyman.*" But Daisy was beyond hearing ; so Linda sank down on the same spot her cousin had vacated, and amused herself by dreamily casting stones into the retreating waters.

Miss Humphreys gave the required permission, much as she would have given it had it been asked for in connection with the Punch and Judy show which was exhibiting at the other end of the parade, giving Daisy precisely the same warning as she would have done under those circumstances,—

"Be careful who you stand or sit near, and be sure you leave if everything is not very nice."

Daisy walked along very quickly until she reached the group, which had now collected in larger numbers than a few moments ago. Children

were coming towards it from all points; some a little over-heated by their run, some with spade and bucket, as if they had forsaken their play on the sands in order to attend.

"*They* like it evidently," said Daisy to herself, as she watched the beaming faces of three little girls who had just come up with their governess. They were evidently quite accustomed to the service; and seeing that Daisy was a stranger, they beckoned her to sit down beside them. Daisy did this very gladly. The next minute some one handed her a hymn-book.

Daisy's attention had all this time been so much taken up with those who were forming the gathering that she had not noticed who was occupying the chair, which was so placed as to face all the children, and she quite started when a gentleman in very musical tones said, as he stood up beside the chair with an open hymn-book in his hand,—

"Now, my dear little friends, let us sing with our hearts as well as our voices a hymn of praise. You see if we *only* sang with our voices, our hymn would never reach Heaven, for God is a spirit—Who can tell me the rest of the verse?"

A girl of almost seven, with an open Bible resting upon her knee, sitting just opposite to Daisy, said in very clear and distinct tones,—

“God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

“Quite right. Thank you,” said the speaker, courteously inclining his head towards the young girl who had spoken.

“Very well, then,” he continued, “we know beyond question that all true worship must come from the heart—do we not? Will you try to remember this, dears, as we sing together the twenty-seventh hymn.”

Then, in a rich tenor voice, the speaker started and led throughout the hymn;

“Come, children, let us sing
The glories of our King,
With heart and voice extol His Name.
The ransomed hosts above,
Who know His mighty love,
Cease not His triumph to proclaim.

* * * *

“Sing of His grace who gave
The Son our souls to save;
Sing of His love who came to die;
Sing of the Loving One,

Who paid the price alone,
That we might dwell with God on high.

“ Make known in this glad hour
His sanctifying power,
Who came, the gracious Paraclete,
To be a constant guest
In every humble breast,
And all the Father's will complete.”

* * * *

Then the speaker bared his head and asked all present to close their eyes, and follow him sentence by sentence in prayer. His prayer was very simple, such as the youngest child could understand—asking to have a sense of the need of forgiveness and cleansing from sin in the Blood of Jesus Christ; then, when the need was realized, to come and make their own the Finished Work of Him “who bore our sins in His own body on the Tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed.”

After the prayer the speaker read part of the fourteenth chapter of St. John, making a running commentary as he went, and illustrating his remarks by many happy anecdotes. Once or twice the children laughed outright at some of his remarks

and then his face beamed more than ever, and he said,—

“That is right, my dear young friends, do not be afraid to laugh. People who love the Lord Jesus are not meant to be dejected and sad. Shall I tell you who are the sad ones?—those who live for pleasure and have no higher thought. There is a little verse somewhere which tells me that ‘she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.’ Some one find it, and then we will all learn it.”

A little girl from the front row quickly found the verse, and read it out; then they all repeated it three or four times over until they had learnt it.

After this another hymn was sung, and then the speaker said,—

“Now for a few words upon a beautiful text which we find in one of the early verses of the fourteenth of St. John. It begins with, ‘And whatsoever——’ who can repeat it?”

Several hands went up at this, and one of the boys repeated, a little nervously,—

“‘And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name

I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.’”

“Yes,” continued the speaker. “Now see how large a promise we have here, so large that it takes the big word *whatsoever* to cover it. Just think for a moment, no limit put upon the asking, only a condition implied. *In My Name*, said the Saviour; not in your own name Ethel Santley, nor in your name George Herbert, but in the Saviour’s Name. Now this promise is *quite true*. Who is there here to-day who will prove its truth?”

Daisy’s heart was beating very quickly. The thought of her poor aunt and the dark sorrow which hung over her as a black cloud—oh! might she not ask for *this* to be removed? Was the “*whatsoever*” *really* large enough to cover that terrible, terrible trial?

But the speaker went on: “I think I know where some of you, my dear young friends, fail. You only *think* you love the Lord Jesus and that you belong to Him, you are not *quite sure*, and so when you pray you only mumble His Name, or perhaps scarcely make any mention

of it at all. His Name is not a *living reality* to you because you are not really and truly His very own. My dear boys and girls, before you can lift that 'whatsoever' and go with it into the Father's presence *sure, certain*, more than positive of being heard, you must know something of the living power of the Name which you will go to plead."

Then followed a most winning appeal. They were not saved because they had been baptized or confirmed, but because they had been *born again*. This new birth had been theirs when they came to the Cross and believed in Him who died, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Were there any there who had not so come? "Then come now, come to-day. Did they want to do so? This was the Holy Spirit pleading within them. How good God was—so full of love! He would not let them perish, or He would have left them to die in their sins, and never have given them the desire to be better."

Daisy listened with rapt attention. Every word came to her heart as *real*. Ever since

she could remember she had loved the Lord Jesus; but there were times, especially lately, when she felt that *duty*, not *love*, had been the motive power of her daily life of reading her Bible and of prayer. There was evidently something yet lacking, for love would be natural and spontaneous. The speaker ended his address by saying solemnly,—

“He gave His life for you; have you given your heart to Him? Until the whole heart has been given, the *whole life* cannot follow! And it is only when we love Him aright and serve Him faithfully that we can understand the marvellous power of His Name, and can in proportion to our belief in His Name carry our ‘whatsoever’ into the Father’s presence, and make our own the promise of His Word!”

Daisy drew a deep breath as the speaker paused. She crept away from the meeting as they were singing the last hymn, fearing some one might come up and ask her questions.

From that day, Daisy was always at these children’s services, when they happened to be out upon the beach at the time of their being held

She always sat on the outside ring, being one of the oldest present, and generally left before the others moved. One day the speaker, in going round to distribute personally some text cards, said in a gentle tone as he put one into Daisy's hand,—

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

“Yes, it is just *hungering*,” said Daisy, almost forgetting that she was revealing her secret thoughts to a stranger.

“They who love God
Cannot love Him by measure;
Their love is but hunger
To love Him still better,”

said the speaker reverently as he passed on.

VII.

THE REALITY OF EVERYTHING.

VII.

THE REALITY OF EVERYTHING.

“We whose law is love serve less
By what we do than what we are.”

WHEN Daisy and Linda had been at the sea-side a fortnight, Mr. Brown came down to spend a few days with them. Strongly urged by Dr. Allen, and earnestly petitioned by his wife herself, he had consented to place Mrs. Brown in a home for inebriate ladies somewhere in the Highlands of Scotland. No one would of course know but what she had gone away—as she often did in the summer—to visit amongst her Scotch friends. In three months' time she was to return home.

Mrs. Brown's condition of mind at this time was one of the very deepest contrition and humiliation. The only bright spot in her dark cloud of shame was the fact that Linda did not know the sad truth.

"Oh! if only my child never guesses the meaning of my headaches, I think I could bear anything," she said to her husband the day he left her; and he promised that she should be told nothing.

Mr. Brown found the girls looking the very picture of health. They had had very fine weather during their stay, and had spent the greater part of each day on the shore, varied occasionally by inland walks in the evening.

"Daisy has grown *so* good, papa," said Linda, whispering to her father as Daisy and Miss Humphreys were walking on in front the evening of Mr. Brown's arrival, when, after a late dinner, they all came out for a saunter on the pier. Linda's tone was half-earnest, half-quizzical.

"Daisy always was good, Linda," replied Mr. Brown, smiling, and looking very fondly at his laughter-loving daughter. In his heart he was wishing that she possessed her cousin's staidness of character. He did not wish her to lose her fun, but he did long to see her a little more *reverent* in regard to sacred things.

"But, papa, I mean she has *grown* in being

good," said Linda ; and she spoke most earnestly as she continued : " They have a children's service on the beach almost every morning, and Daisy quite loves going. I thought at first that it was only meant for people who knew nothing about good things ; but I see almost everybody goes whom we notice at church on Sunday amongst the visitors' children. *I* have only watched them at a distance, but they really *look* as if they enjoyed it ! "

Mr. Brown was interested, and asked many questions about these services. Linda ran on to walk with Miss Humphreys, and sent Daisy to her father to answer his questions.

" I want to hear about these beach services," said Mr. Brown, linking his arm in Daisy's and slackening his pace in walking, to let Linda and Miss Humphreys get well out of hearing.

Daisy's cheeks were very rosy and her eyes quite lustrous as she said enthusiastically,—

" Oh ! uncle, they have been *so* helpful. I never before felt everything to be so *real*."

" What do you mean, Daisy ? " Mr. Brown asked quietly ; and his thoughts went back to the

evening soon after Daisy came to live with them, during her stay at the sea-side, when she had said in a way he should never forget that Heaven had become so real since her mother's death. "What do you mean about everything being so real, Daisy?" Mr. Brown had repeated his question as there was no answer.

"Only this, uncle," said Daisy, speaking very deliberately, "I have found out that I am a *real* sinner, and that the Lord Jesus is a *real* Saviour, and that there is a *real* life we have to live for Him!"

Mr. Brown looked down upon his niece with astonishment. Had she had to come away from home to learn this fact, when Sunday after Sunday he was always doing his best to teach this truth to his congregation? It would be difficult to describe Mr. Brown's feeling; it was not jealousy, it was surprise, with just the additional wonder, which partook somewhat of the nature of curiosity, as to the kind of man who had been able to produce an impression upon Daisy when he himself had failed.

Daisy did not notice her uncle's look. She was absorbed in her own thoughts, thinking for

perhaps the hundredth time that, after all, this *reality* was no different from the teaching of her dear mother in years gone by, only that she had been too young to take it all in then as she did now. And one thing was different; Daisy's mother had always within the young girl's recollection been an invalid. "Now Mr. Coultonsby was very strong, quite young, and as good-looking and bright as if—as if he never preached." This was the summing-up of Daisy's thoughts.

"Who generally takes this service?" asked Mr. Brown after a pause.

"Oh, Mr. Coultonsby, always, uncle," said Daisy, "excepting once when his father, Colonel Coultonsby, was here and took it for him."

"Coultonsby—Coultonsby!" said Mr. Brown, thoughtfully, "that is a very uncommon name; I wonder whether they belong to the family into which my sister married?" (Mr. Brown's sister had married while abroad and had died within a year or two. She had gone out to Calcutta with a lady friend just for a year's visit, but had never returned.)

Mr. Brown had asked the question of himself;

it was not likely that Daisy could know anything about it. At that moment Daisy drew his attention to a young man, tall, with fair, curly hair and light whiskers. He was talking very earnestly with two ladies, and they were all watching a boat as it drew near the shore.

"That is he," said Daisy, quietly. "Why not ask him, uncle, if he belongs to the friends you knew?"

Mr. Brown was beginning to do so before Daisy had quite finished her speech.

"Undoubtedly," said the young man, extending his hand frankly to Mr. Brown, as he, with few words, had explained his connection with the name of Coultonsby, and had asked if the gentleman to whom he was speaking could possibly be a relation. "Undoubtedly; but my father will be better able to tell you about it. Allow me to introduce you to my two sisters."

As Mr. Coultonsby said this, he turned round and saw Daisy standing just behind.

"This is my niece, Daisy Snowflake," said Mr. Brown, introducing Daisy. "And I have to thank you on her behalf for your very helpful services on

the shore," he added, remembering the fact which had led to his own introduction to Mr. Coultonsby.

A very friendly chat ensued ; cards were exchanged, Mr. Coultonsby promising to bring his father to call upon Mr. Brown the following morning.

Daisy and Linda were just going out with Mr. Brown when Mr. Coultonsby and his father called the next day. The morning had been very showery, so they had deferred their visit until the afternoon.

"Do not let us interfere with your arrangements," said Colonel Coultonsby, after the first greetings were over ; "we shall be quite glad to turn round and accompany you in your walk, if you will allow us."

"By all means," answered Mr. Brown ; "a morning within doors at the sea-side is in itself a reason for an afternoon by the shore, if circumstances favour the getting there."

They therefore all strolled off together, Mr. Brown and the Colonel leading the way, Daisy and Linda following them at a short distance, Mr. Brown soon discovered that he was related, as he had surmised, to Colonel Coultonsby by the

marriage of his sister,—she having married the Colonel's cousin, a civil engineer,—and he very eagerly made inquiries as to the last months of his sister's life ; details of which he had never been able before to gather.

“She was particularly happy with my cousin,” said the Colonel, frankly. “To tell you the truth, we all thought the marriage somewhat hasty. They had only known each other about three weeks when it took place. But when we found how really united the two were, and how completely happy, we withdrew our adverse judgment, and I can assure you without hesitation that we soon learnt to view matters in quite a different light from that in which we did at first, congratulating Horace Coultonsby most warmly upon his good fortune in securing such an excellent wife. Poor thing ! she died within a short time of the birth of her child, as you know, the child surviving its mother only a few hours, and poor Horace we always felt hastened his own end by fretting. He caught the jungle fever, and had no rallying power.”

In the meanwhile a very different conversation

was going on between the trio who were walking leisurely behind.

"I do not think I have seen you at our services, Miss Brown," said Mr. Coultonsby, smiling; he had heard from the one who had invited Linda of her answer, and the tone in which she had said, "You make a mistake, I am a clergyman's daughter."

Linda blushed consciously. Then she said frankly, "Well, you know, Mr. Coultonsby, I came to the sea-side to enjoy myself, and I do not feel, with my cousin, that attending religious meetings belongs to this sort of thing—enjoyment I mean."

"Ah! I see you have yet to learn a secret," said Mr. Coultonsby, smiling again, but this time almost tenderly. "Do you not know that the Psalmist said, 'In Thy presence there is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore'?" and the words are as true to-day as then, because whatever else changes, God cannot change, and all concerning Him remains ever the same."

"Daisy knows it's true, I suppose," said Linda,

shrugging her shoulders quite unconsciously, but as if she had something about her which felt in the way.

Mr. Coultonsby looked at Daisy for an instant. Her face was turned away so that he could not see it, but he could tell that she was glancing upwards to the sky, and he felt sure, could he have seen them, her eyes were full of a far-off, dreamy look, which he had often noticed there when she was sitting somewhere near to him at his services.

At this moment Linda caught sight of Miss Humphreys in the distance, and bounded off, possibly secretly very glad to have an opportunity of breaking off the conversation.

"Do you know about this 'fulness of joy,' Miss Daisy?" said Mr. Coultonsby.

Daisy looked up into his face timidly, and answered, "Yes, and you have taught me."

"I am so glad, so very glad," exclaimed Mr. Coultonsby; "I knew you were longing to possess it, so I brought your longing with many others in my WHATSOEVER, and, of course, the answer came."

"Do you really mean—" said Daisy, and then she paused and grew red, and then she began again,—“do you really mean that you prayed for me, and I got *it*? Oh! if only you would help me to pray for something which is very sad, very terrible, but oh, I must *get it*! and I may not tell you anything about it, so what is the use of asking you?” and poor Daisy turned away to hide her tears.

Linda was by this time racing back again to them, so Mr. Coultonsby said quietly,—

“No need to tell me,—God will know, and I will pray for it as ‘Daisy’s secret.’ ”

Daisy looked at him gratefully but made no answer.

Linda had entirely got over her confusion, and her mood had changed. She took upon herself to ask questions.

“Why, if you are so fond of preaching, do you not go to the university and become a clergyman?” she asked, with just so much gentleness in her tone as saved the question from sounding pert.

“I have been to the university, Miss Linda,” replied Mr. Coultonsby, looking a little merry

over Linda's changed mood ; "and I did *not* become a clergyman because I preferred being a doctor instead. I spend all my spare time in preaching because I love to get people to think and read and pray and hunger after what is divine," he added, as he looked at Daisy for a moment. "I do not feel I am serving God either more or better when I am preaching than when I am attending to my practice, because I know that all true life is true service, and nothing less than what is true can endure and be accepted by Him."

Linda opened her eyes. Daisy's face brightened. Before anything more was said the Colonel and Mr. Brown had joined them, and some short time afterwards there was hand-shaking and saying good-bye, Mr. Brown reminding Mr. Coultonsby that he should do himself the pleasure of attending his service the next day if the weather were fine enough for him to hold it.

VIII.

A WORD AT RANDOM SPOKEN.



VIII.

A WORD AT RANDOM SPOKEN.

“They feel not joy who have not sorrow felt :
We through affliction make our way to Heaven.”

MR. BROWN'S impression of the young preacher was in every way favourable. He saw his heart was in all he said. That which he was seeking to make known to others was a living fact to himself. Hence he only spoke out of the full abundance of his heart. The beach services were very specially intended for children, but Mr. Brown could not help thinking that there were many present who, like himself, though far removed from childhood, could not fail to be helped and strengthened by the youthful pleading of this very noble and manly fellow. A little less noble and manly, a little more feeble and *goody-goody*, and Mr. Brown for one would have had grave doubts as to the

unqualified good likely to result from these services.

Gerald Coultonsby, to the young especially, possessed an advantage which the rector was not slow to discover. He was nearer of an age to many of them than an ordinary pastor would probably have been; he told them the glorious Gospel in terms free from formality or ordinary sermon phraseology. His subject the morning Mr. Brown heard him first was, "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

"If you would only taste for yourselves, my dear friends," he said with beaming smile, "*I* should never have to plead with you again. Once to *know* for yourselves the joy of the true believer in Christ, and every earthly joy would be so much worthless rubbish. Mark, I do not say you would from that moment cease to value the pleasures which now you enjoy—some of them, intellectual pleasures, pleasures of friendship and other things that are given to you as part of the blessing of this life; but even these, with Christ in them, would be greatly enhanced. But

all joys which belong simply to this world would cease to be joys, because you would see things in their real light, and having as your very own that which was most precious, you would be too wise to value imitation things.

“Why! a cousin of mine was very fond of displaying on her very pretty white hand a diamond ring. Some of her girl friends said it was ‘lovely,’ ‘a real beauty.’ Marion would listen to their praises with pleasure, although she knew that really and truly the ring was valueless, as it was, after all, not real, but only paste. (*I wonder that Marion cared to wear false jewellery; and you do, do you not?*) Well, one day Marion’s brother came back from India. He brought a great many presents, and, amongst other things, a ring for his sister. When he noticed Marion’s hand he felt quite disappointed, because the ring she wore was just like the one he had brought her. He looked at it a little more closely, however, and soon detected that it was not real.

“‘Marion, I am surprised at your wearing paste diamonds,’ he said to her when they were alone.

"His sister coloured up as she replied, 'I should not do it if I had any real ones to wear! These are much better than nothing, and very few people would know the difference!'"

"Her brother drew a case from his pocket, and took out the diamond ring which he had brought all the way from India.

"'What do you say to that, Marion?' he asked; 'it is yours if you will accept it!'"

"'Then good-bye for ever to this rubbish!' said Marion, hastily taking the sham ring off her finger and throwing it into the fire. 'Only think, I actually do possess a *real* diamond ring! Oh! Edward, how kind of you! you dear, liberal fellow! what a lot of money it must have cost you!' and Marion's face beamed with joy.

"Ah! my dear young friends," said Mr. Coultonsby solemnly, "some one has purchased and now brings to you *true, real* pleasures,—purchased them at a cost far beyond our powers of realizing, even at the cost of His own life. Will you not accept them and cast from you as utterly worthless the sham ones which have hitherto delighted your hearts?"

“Oh! do believe it is *real* that Christ died for you, not only that you might go to Heaven by-and-bye, when this life is over, but that here, *in this life*, you may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, come into the possession of your joys, and live a true, grand, Christlike life,—a life which is vigorous in its strength to resist evil, noble in its every aspiration, magnificently in earnest to ‘do good and to communicate.’”

Mr. Coultonsby broke off here and gave out a hymn, the singing of which was most effective :—

“Our Master has taken His journey
To a country that’s far away,
And has left us the care of the vineyard
To work for Him day by day.

CHORUS.

“There’s a work for me, and a work for you,
Something for each of us *now* to do ;
Yes ! a work for me and a work for you,
Something for each of us *now* to do.

“In this ‘little while’ doth it matter,
As we work and we watch and we wait,
If we’re filling the place He assigns us,
Be its service small or great ?

CHORUS.

"There's a work for me and a work for you,
Something for each of us *now* to do, etc.

"There's surely one thing should concern us,
To find just the task that is ours ;
And then, having found it, *to do it*
With all our God-given powers.

CHORUS.

"There's a work for me and a work for you,
Something for each of us *now* to do, etc.

"Our Master is coming most surely
To reckon with every one,
Shall we *then* count our toil or our sorrow
If He say to us, "Well done"?

CHORUS.

"There's a work for me and a work for you,
Something for each of us *now* to do, etc."

The chorus was sung very vigorously each time, and was repeated two or three times after the last verse. Mr. Coultonsby then went back to his text, "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

Very earnestly he spoke of "the goodness of God," very persuasively he pleaded with his hearers to listen to the gentle voice of Him "who His

own Self in His own body bare our sins upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness ; by whose stripes we are healed." And then he depicted the multitudes who in spite of all this went on their way heedlessly, recklessly, defiantly. "Oh ! is *one* here willing to join *that* multitude ?" he asked ; and in the solemn pause which followed, he quoted those familiar lines, well known to many, but, alas ! too little pondered :—

"Tramp, tramp on the downward way,
With seldom a stop and never a stay,
Loving the darkness, hating light,
Our faces set towards eternal night !
Each has answered God's cry,
' Why will ye die ? Turn ye—turn ye !'
' Not I, not I !'

We have bartered away His gems of gold
For the empty husks and the shadows cold ;
We have laugh'd at the devil's tightening chains,
And bidden him forge them strong !
And God has kept on loving us,
Loving all along.

"The love still flows as we tramp on :
A sorrowful fall in its pleading tone :
' Thou wilt tire in the dreary ways of sin ;
I left My Home to bring thee in !
In its golden streets stand no weary feet,
Its rest is glorious, its songs are sweet !'

And we shout back angrily, hurrying on
To a terrible home where rest is none :
'We want not your city's golden street,
Nor to hear its constant song !'
And still God keeps on loving us,
Loving all along.

"And the tender Voice pursues each one,
'My child, what more could thy God have done ?
Thy sin hid the light of Heaven from Me,
When, alone in the darkness, I died for thee !
Thy sin of this day, in its shadow lay,
Between My face and One turned away !'
And we stop and turn for a moment's space,
Flinging back the love in the Saviour's face,
To give His heart yet another grief,
And glory in the wrong :
And Christ is always loving us,
Loving all along.

"One is bending low before the King,
And the angels listen with quivering wing ;
He *has* entered the city, and sings its hymn,
While the gold of its street through tears is dim !
'To Him who so loved me and washed me white,—
To Him be all honour and power and might !'
That marvellous love no sin could move
Waited, and, wearied not, sought and strove.
To us through the darkness the Voice still calls
From the gleaming heights of the jasper walls :
To the long kept places our welcome waits
Amid the exultant throng ;
And God will still be loving us,
Loving all along."

“Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good!” Mr. Coultonsby again repeated, and yet once again, leaving in the hearts of some of his hearers that one solemn appeal, which, if all else were effaced from memory, would linger on as a never-to-be-forgotten text.

After this Mr. Brown was seldom missing from Mr. Coultonsby's beach service, and rejoiced with many others that the more settled weather allowed them to be continued daily. The rector very often waited for the young evangelist and brought him home with him to lunch.

On one of these occasions Mr. Coultonsby remarked,—

“I am so glad to find you are all teetotalers. My medical experience would alone convince me of the need of total abstinence among all thinking people, even supposing I did not believe in it upon purely Christian grounds.”

“What are your Christian grounds?” asked Mr. Brown; he had really adopted total abstinence as a matter of expediency, not from any higher motive; and as Mr. Coultonsby knew nothing of the sad circumstances of his home life,

believing Mrs. Brown to be staying with her friends in preference to coming to the sea-side, he felt at liberty to speak.

“‘Whatsoever ye do, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him,’” replied Mr. Coultonsby, in reverent tones. “While I know that sixty thousand of my fellow-creatures, for whom Christ died, are annually sacrificed to the god of drink, I cannot, *in the Name* of my Saviour, take that which has proved their ruin. That is firstly. And the secondly is this: The Master said, ‘Without Me ye can do nothing.’ This work of seeking to rescue the intemperate and of preventing the formation of habits which might lead to intemperance is *His work*, and as such it becomes to me increasingly important, as I see the need and realize my privileges and responsibilities in regard to the fact that I am a witness of Christ, bearing testimony to His power, His purpose, His love, His unselfishness, and His yearning over the souls of men. Then, thirdly, I believe in the religion of the body, and I know that alcohol more often enfeebles the body than strengthens it



(putting it very mildly). And, fourthly,—and this is a religious conviction simply because I hold that, if our bodies be the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is our solemn responsibility to watch over them, and not to encourage the growth of the seeds of disease, in whatever form that disease may attack them—I know that the love of strong drink is handed down from parent to child, and once in the blood, is more fatal than either consumption or cancer!”

Daisy turned very pale, while Linda said under her breath, “He thinks this because he is a doctor;” and she added out loud,

“Well then, the first thing to be thankful for is that nobody belonging to you takes too much. Papa, did you ever hear of any one belonging to me being fond of it? I begin to be horribly frightened, because you know I am not a *real* teetotaler, I am only one to please papa and Daisy. I *love* champagne; and I think a good draught of ale is worth all the ginger-beer and lemonade in the world!”

Linda had said this in her usual wild, half-merry, half-defiant way. Mr. Brown had raised his hand

as if to check her, but she had rattled on, and might have said more had not Daisy at that moment quietly slipped off the chair on to the floor in a dead faint.

Mr. Coultonsby was by her side in a moment. Linda, greatly frightened, ran off for Miss Humphreys (who had left the table some few minutes before); and Mr. Brown went off in quest of smelling salts.

Daisy lay quite unconscious for several moments. Miss Humphreys bathed her forehead and hands, while Mr. Coultonsby felt her pulse and gave general directions what to do. Linda, who returned with Miss Humphreys, had been taken out of the room by her father. She was weeping bitterly at seeing Daisy so death-like.

A deep-drawn breath, another and another, and Daisy opened her eyes.

"She will do now," said Mr. Coultonsby, releasing her hand and assisting her to sit up by placing his arm underneath her shoulder. Then giving one or two further directions to Miss Humphreys, he withdrew, very much mystified. He had watched Daisy's face while her cousin had been

speaking, and felt quite sure that her faint had been brought on by suppressed feeling.

"I have it," he said to himself as he hastened to his own lodgings; "somebody's sorrow and Daisy's secret, about which I am praying, are in some way connected with drink. I wonder whether it is the poor child's father!" Mr. Brown had explained to the Colonel that his niece was motherless, but that they had no definite knowledge of her father's death. He only having once written in about six years the gravest fears were entertained.

The next day Mr. Brown returned home, and Daisy, pleading very hard to go too, accompanied him; Miss Humphreys and Linda were to return the following week. The Colonel and his son saw Mr. Brown and Daisy off. There was no opportunity afforded to any one for conversation. The train was in when Daisy and her uncle reached the station. Mr. Coultonsby said "Good-bye" very quietly; adding simply, "We will not forget the *whatsoever*;" but when Daisy's eyes at once filled with tears, he almost regretted having referred to it.

IX.

THE HIGHLAND HOME.

IX.

THE HIGHLAND HOME.

“ For the sad and sinful
Shall His grace abound ;
For the faint and feeble
Perfect strength be found.”

MRS. BROWN was very happy during her three months' stay in the Highlands. The medical man under whose charge she had been placed was most kind. Of buoyant and hopeful spirit himself, he contrived to inspire his patients with hope, without which he was often heard to say recovery from such a disease was impossible. Mrs. Brown submitted to his firm, wise rule with feelings of gratitude. She yearned to be delivered from the cruel power of the tyrant who from time to time held sway over her, and she accepted all Dr. Watson's measures on her behalf as so many promises of future conquest and triumph.

To his gentle wife, Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Brown

would often speak in fullest detail of her trouble.

"No one can tell but those who experience it," she said one day when talking to her, "how terrible the power and woeful the fascination of that craving within. I have paced my room for hours when I have felt it coming on ; I have knelt in prayer until my face has been bathed in perspiration ; I have clasped my hand so tightly together that my nails have pressed into my knuckles and brought the blood ; and the next minute I have gone stealthily to the side-board cupboard and literally drained every decanter I could place my hands upon !"

"Poor darling !" said Mrs. Watson, tenderly, kissing Mrs. Brown's flushed cheek,—and in that sympathetic touch the vigorous will of a strong woman gained a holy influence over the feeble will of a weak one,—“how terrible it must be for you ! and yet, no doubt, in bygone years you were taught at home to consider strong drink as a most harmless luxury, a natural addition to a well-furnished dinner, a necessary, if not chief, thought upon all festive occasions,—in

short, a *something* which made life better, brighter, happier!"

"Yes, it was just that," said Mrs. Brown, musingly. "My father was an excellent man, a perfect gentleman, and very particular in all details of home life. He brewed his own ale to ensure its being genuine, and paid the very highest prices for his wines, telling my brothers it was part of their education to cultivate the taste for good wines. I do not suppose it ever entered his head to imagine it within the limits of possibility for one of us, with our many social advantages and Christian privileges, to become the victim of a craving to which the poor and the uneducated were sometimes subject. I remember very well his great dislike to all temperance work. He said extremes of any kind were foolish, and signs of weakness: if the drunkard did not know how to stop himself unless he took a pledge of total abstinence, by all means let him take a pledge; but let him remember it was all the time a sign of weakness, and weakness which no temperate man could honestly seek to lend himself to!"

"Ah! the usual arguments," said Mrs. Watson,

thoughtfully ; "arguments which many good men and women use to this day."

"While their children, as living illustrations of the utter fallacy of their reasoning, turn out, alas ! how often, such—such as myself," said Mrs. Brown bitterly.

Dr. Watson, who had entered the room unseen by Mrs. Brown, although observed by his wife, joined in the conversation here.

"You must remember that we medical men have had much to answer for in unconsciously influencing such men as your father against temperance, by insisting that health demanded the constant use of alcohol, and because such was the case, forcing the belief that what was so necessary to the highest development and sustentation of physical power *must be* in itself not only lawful but expedient for every one's use ; so making it unmistakably a sign of weakness if that which was so needful to the well-being of the human body had to be abandoned on account of some secondary motive. Had your father lived to-day, Mrs. Brown, judging from what you have said of him, could he have had the benefit of the opinions

of medical men who have the courage of their convictions and speak out plainly, declaring the use of alcohol as a beverage to be an unmitigated evil, and its use as a medicine to be not an unqualified good, he would have held different views, and you would have had a training which might have saved you the terrible experience in which your education as a moderate drinker has so fatally involved you!"

"Possibly," said Mrs. Brown; "and yet, doctor, do you not find that the most thoughtful are terribly stubborn and refuse to be convinced?"

"Alas! too often," said Dr. Watson, rising as he spoke, a young fair-haired girl at that moment entering the room.

"Well, Miss Simpson," said Dr. Watson, cheerfully, "have you enjoyed your drive? It seems just the day for one,—the dust settled by last night's rain, the sun not too scorching on account of the constant overshadowing of the clouds!"

Miss Simpson did not answer. She looked unutterably sad as she came and stood by the doctor; her hands moved nervously, her lips parted as if she were about to speak, but no voice

came. Dr. Watson realized by quick intuitive power what was the matter. Miss Simpson—the only daughter of one of London's merchant princes, and but very recently consigned to his care as a dipsomaniac patient—Miss Simpson was feeling the terrible power of the craving for drink, and had sought his presence for protection.

Twenty summers had not passed over that fair girl's head since an innocent, crowing babe she lay in the arms of a nurse who, in order to keep her infant charge quiet, did not hesitate to give her from time to time, in a tea-spoon, a few drops diluted with water of gin which she had secreted in a half-pint bottle in an under pocket.

"You certainly are the best nurse I have ever known for keeping the baby quiet," said Nurse's "lady" one morning, as she turned herself languidly round upon her couch, and took up the third volume of a large-type novel.

"Yes, ma'am," said Nurse, with a very complacent smile. She was a fully certificated nurse, and prided herself upon her training, part of which was to speak in a soft, flowing voice, and

never to forget that the smile was to accompany each sentence as a sort of full-stop to it.

Let it not be thought for one moment that we detract in the slightest degree from the substantial excellence of a trained nurse, be she monthly nurse or otherwise. There are nurses *and* nurses. The one of whom we speak belonged to the latter class, which let us hope for the good of humanity is in a considerable minority,—a class which manages, for the time being at least, to deceive both doctor and patient: calm if not dignified in manner, gentle even to fascination in speech, gliding in movement, flowing in conversational powers, perfect mistress of her position, who would guess that underneath this outside veneer lies a “subtle self,” which has its baser motive in all that *seems* so fair and full of beauty,—a determination to deceive in order to reap some present advantage; a reckless disregard of after consequences so long as the work of to-day goes smoothly? Alas! for the disastrous woe that such an one has power to bring into the purest home and to leave there.

Such was Nellie Simpson’s nurse, who because

so successful in her cruel and wicked deception, making herself invaluable to a delicate and rather indolent mother, was retained as such for several months. That she had got her young charge into bad habits was clear enough to some when at length she took her departure, because the quiet babe who had given no trouble suddenly developed into the fretful, restless child ; but even here, although so evident that something was wrong, Mrs. Simpson, with a blind admiration for her late nurse, suggested the failure of to-day might all be due to present bad management, following as it did upon a past of most perfect skill in the way of trained and well-ordered arrangement !

And thus baby Nellie was talked to, coaxed, and scolded by turns for her restlessness and unceasing fretfulness, and no one had a suspicion of the true cause. As time went on she grew into a healthy, vigorous little maiden, a delight to the whole household, and, as she proved to be the only child given to those wealthy parents, the petted and somewhat spoilt darling of both father and mother. Not until ten years of age did any one feel anxiety

about her evident fondness for "sips" out of her father's evening glass of spirits and water. She did not care for wine; made wry faces over her little glass of ale when urged to take it "as ordered by the doctor" on various occasions at long intervals; but whenever her father mixed a glass of spirits for himself, Nellie would creep up cautiously and ask in a coaxing tone "for one tiny taste." On one occasion some one visiting them had had gin and water,—a mixture Mr. Simpson never took,—and Nellie had drained his glass after he had withdrawn, saying the smell of the gin possessed quite a fascination for her.

We cannot attempt to trace out in detail the fuller development of Nellie's love for spirits, chiefly gin; her sly artifices whereby she became the possessor of the much-coveted drink, not in small quantities but in bottles; her parents' shock to discover their only child to be as one possessed of a demon; their efforts to conceal the discovery, to break the chains by severe discipline; then, when that failed, by a long sea-voyage under medical care. We cannot dwell upon their newly awakened hopes when Nellie became engaged to a gentle-

man of high position, who, of course, knew nothing of her sorrow ; their belief that *now* all would be well—Nellie's deep affection for this worthy man would develop all the better qualities of her nature, and the lesser and meaner ones would be controlled, or even stifled out of existence. Nor can we tell in detail the disaster which came so suddenly upon them when, after several months of calm, on the eve of her marriage, the wedding-day fixed, the guests invited and the breakfast prepared, Nellie appeared before her lover in a state of intoxication, and declared with reckless, wanton cruelty that she preferred her much-loved gin to him ! “What was life to her without it ?” We draw the curtain before a scene which had the tragical end of a lover turned into a madman, and only lift it now for a moment to find Nellie an inmate of Dr. Watson's home, looking woefully wretched as he inquires with gentle courtesy how she has enjoyed her recent drive.

That the poor girl was suffering from “the craving” was quite apparent to Dr. Watson. He was complete master of the occasion, having learnt by experience that at these times moral

force and physical restraint were powerful allies ; in other words, that, while the closest watch must be kept over his patient's movements, the mind must be employed and great care taken to disperse by hopeful conversation the depression and gloom which had gathered with the blackness of night about the spirit caged within.

Late that evening Dr. Watson told his wife that he felt sorely perplexed about Miss Simpson. While apparently yielding to all his wishes and commands, she had shown a certain restlessness for some few hours which denoted some brooding fancy or determination. He could not coax her to break her self-imposed silence. He hoped better things after a long rest, but in the meanwhile he had left two of his best nurses in charge for the night.

Mrs. Watson felt troubled, and slept little in consequence. At daybreak she went round to Nellie's room. All seemed quiet there ; but on going in she found it vacant. Anxiously wondering where patient and nurses could be, her eye caught sight of something lying upon the floor, in shape like a three-cornered note. She hastily

picked it up. It was addressed to "Doctor Watson," and read thus,—

"Dear Doctor, best and kindest of men ; dear Mrs. Watson, and all kind friends here and everywhere—farewell. I cannot live longer in this wretchedness. I live but to sin. The more I struggle, the more deadly is my craving. Oh ! the bitter, bitter shame of it ! I am meditating self-destruction ; you will soon learn how and by what means. There will be an inquest upon my body, and they will give me a verdict, 'Met with her death while in a state of temporary insanity.' And it will be a generous verdict, if only it were true. If less sane than I am, what rest it would be to my spirit ! My misfortune would be less awful, for I could find hope in believing that only the insane part of me yielded to this deadly passion and appetite ; that the sane part of me loathed it, deplored it, cursed it. But the more sane part of me loves, adores, worships this passion ! It is a part of my very nature ; it is the 'I' of my individuality. It can only, surely, be the insane part of me that is mad enough to hope that I am going to be saved

from myself—turned inside out, and made all over again. . . .

“My dear parents, it is my love for you that makes me seek death, to spare you from further shame and disgrace on my account. I have hope—dare I breathe it?—there is forgiveness, cleansing, healing. Jesus Christ is a living reality to me! I love Him with my whole soul, and every day deny Him because I possess an awful power—or, rather, an awful power possesses me! What *am* I to do? Oh! the bitter, bitter woe of the drink curse!”

The letter ended here. It was carefully written, carefully folded. Mrs. Watson only glanced at it; she did not then read it as you and I have done, dear reader. In the greatest terror and excitement she flew with it to her husband. Ten minutes later and he was on the cliffs some fifty yards from his house, anxiously, eagerly scanning the distant heights. Had Miss Simpson sought self-destruction in this way? No other one presented itself to the doctor's mind. While he searched thus breathlessly for some sign of a human being upon

those cliffs, his eye rested upon something dark in the distance—almost two hundred yards away. It looked like a figure crouching down by the cliff, on a narrow ledge some twelve feet from the sea. Very cautiously Dr. Watson made his way towards the spot. As he got nearer, he found the crouching form assumed the aspect of two crouching forms. And now he is within three yards of them, and he sees plainly that there are three people here,—Miss Simpson lying her full length, and the two nurses kneeling beside her.

“She most cleverly escaped from her room,” said one of the nurses in explanation. “She had complained of heat; would have the door open, and then watched her opportunity and fled. In an instant she was down stairs—in the library—and through the glass door on to the terrace. We pursued, but gained no ground until she fell. She has been unconscious ever since!”

Alas, poor Nellie! in heart a suicide; but the merciful Hand of a Heavenly Father, He “who knoweth our frames, who remembereth we are but dust,” restrained you. You had thought to seek a watery grave; but ere your feet touched the



shore you fell! Poor child, poor darling! you had no mercy upon yourself, but God pitied you. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

For days Nellie lay unconscious. Brain fever in its worst form set in. In deepest anguish, her parents watched with others beside her bed. At length there came the morning dawn after a night of intense darkness; Nellie awoke to consciousness, to tender pleading for forgiveness, to earnest yearning to live and glorify God as one a "more than conqueror" through Him who hath loved us. But it was not to be. He who doeth all things well, did not suffer that frail bark to journey longer over life's tempestuous waters. He gently guided it into the eternal harbour, where, safely anchored in His love, it could no longer run the risk of being wrecked, tossed by the boisterous waves of passion upon rocks which have brought ruin and destruction to hardier vessels and barks less fragile.

Nellie's young life ended almost suddenly at the last. They thought her better, calmer, more like the self of former years, when, with a few sacred

words of farewell, she lay back upon her pillows, folded her hands, and whispered softly the prayer of childhood's years—

“ Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon this little child,
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer—me—to—come—to—Thee.”

Perfect silence. The gentle Saviour had “suffered” Nellie to come to Him.

* * * * *

This sorrowful incident made a deep impression upon Mrs. Brown. The doctor hoped, and not without reason, that the impression would never be quite effaced from her memory. He regarded her as a most promising patient; and when her three months under his care at length came to an end, while wishing the time could have been extended to six, he parted from her with more hope and fewer doubts about her permanent recovery than had been the case with any previous patient.

X.

*CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN PAST AND
PRESENT.*

CHAPTER X.

CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT.

“To love is to live, to live is to work, to work is to enjoy, and so again to work and to live will be to love in proportionate fulness and perfection Him who is Love.”

MORE than six years have passed since the events narrated in the last chapter. Daisy is now eighteen, “a very lovely girl” some call her, while others prefer Linda’s style of beauty, and say that in her cousin’s presence Daisy Snowflake is “nothing extraordinary.” Any way, these two girls get a very large share of admiration; but while Linda thoroughly appreciates her own popularity, Daisy appears altogether unconscious of the fact that more notice is taken of her now than in the school-room days, when as the Rector’s orphan niece she always came in for her share of attention.

Linda’s character resembles her style of beauty

in being lively, vivacious, sparkling. She is always full of fun, making great merriment for her young companions, and winning the unqualified admiration of the old.

She has had her first offer. She declared herself desperately in love with the gentleman's eyes, and allowed that she encouraged his attentions just to see how far he could fall in love with her without breaking his heart. Alas, poor Linda! that she could sport with feelings so solemn. But when he asked her father's permission to speak to her, Linda's mood changed, and she pretended to be very indignant that a man fifteen years her senior should presume to fall in love with her! She begged her father to tell him that when she married she should choose some one a few years younger than herself, and that would not be at present, as she certainly intended to remain single until she was eighty! Of course the gentleman in question never received the message; but he went abroad as soon as he could quite realise that Linda was not likely to change her mind, and married his cousin six months later.

Daisy had always appeared more or less sedate by the side of her high-spirited cousin, and now the contrast was more striking than ever. Daisy was invited out quite as much as Linda, but she seldom accepted all her invitations, much to the discomfiture of good Miss Humphreys, who acted in society as a sort of *duenna* to the two girls, Mrs. Brown very rarely going out.

What Linda was in the homes of the rich, Daisy was in the homes of the poor. There was scarcely a cottage in the parish where she was not known and loved. Her beaming face and hopeful words came often as the sunshine to disperse some cloud of sorrow which had gathered about the lives of the thoughtless. Daisy's bright influence was not the exuberance of human joy, but the conscious sympathy of a heart in which lived the Divine life.

Daisy's religious impressions of six years ago, when she felt at those sea-side services during Mr. Coultonsby's addresses the *reality* of spiritual life, had been deepened considerably. She had now an experience to fall back upon, rich in much which before had been but a grand hope, a shadowy

and undefined longing. Her life to-day possessed some of the vigour which was the Psalmist's when he said, "I believe, *therefore* have I spoken." Quite unconsciously to herself, Daisy's very existence was an unspoken appeal to the careless: "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him!"

Let us follow her on one of those Sunday afternoons, when she feels "she *must*, just because she cannot help it,"—a very human definition of inspiration!—talk to the people of those things about which they are most silent.

"Mrs. Green, *may* I make use of your front room? there are several who will come in if only we invite them," inquires Daisy, looking in with flushed cheeks and beaming eyes upon a poor widow who is known to be one of the most respectable tenants of New Building Row.

Daisy has left much unspoken, but Mrs. Green understands. This is not Miss Snowflake's first visit of the kind, nor is it likely to be the last, judging by the very hearty way in which the widow says,—

"Bless you, miss! why, *of course* you may!

I'll have the chairs ready in a moment ;" and suiting the action to the word, Mrs. Green bustles about to put all the chairs her little house boasts into the front room.

In the meanwhile Daisy goes from house to house with the reiterated inquiry in each, "Who would like to come to Widow Green's cottage? I am going to sing something that all will like." She has not to ask twice; there is a general rush towards Widow Green's; and Daisy finds the room closely packed when she returns to it. Two or three men, more bashful than the rest, stand just outside "to finish their pipes," *they* plead; but Daisy knows it would have been nearer the truth to have said, "We are standing *outside* lest Miss Snowflake's remarks should be too personal, when we can if we choose slip away."

For Daisy does not confine herself to simply singing. She has a rich contralto voice, which she regards as a gift entrusted to her by "the Giver of all good gifts;" and because of that she has been led to exercise her powers of giving pleasure to others not only in the drawing-rooms of the rich (where she is very careful in her selection of

songs, remembering that her voice, to fulfil its mission, must not only gratify the ear but convey a message to the heart), but in the cottage homes of the poor ; hence the flocking into Widow Green's front room when the impromptu meeting is suggested. All who have attended such a meeting before know that Miss Snowflake is sure to "speak" as well as sing. She generally improves the occasion. The women say she "hits very hard" sometimes, and they scarcely like it; but the men say she "speaks straight," and the majority prefer that she should do so.

And now Daisy begins :—"I am going to sing you something I do not think any of you will have heard before. You will listen to every word, I know, just as I did the other day when for the first time I heard a lady sing it—not in a room like this, but in a gentleman's drawing-room, where there were nearly a hundred people. You see the lady knew so well that all those people might find comfort in this beautiful story, just exactly as I know that all of you may find comfort in it. The rich and the poor are all one in their need of heavenly comfort. A little girl once asked 'if a poor man's soul was

black and a rich man's soul was white? *of course* there would be some difference!' No, no difference, dear friends: 'The rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them all.' All are sinners, all need the same Saviour. But listen, and I will tell you about Him."

Then Daisy sang in a rich, clear voice, every word distinctly given; her face the while clothed with a look which told very plainly to her hearers that she herself *felt* every word she was singing. Now it would be radiant in its gladness, now sad and subdued. There was a strange suppression of feeling, which touched many to tears, in Daisy's manner and voice as she reached that part of the hymn—she was singing "the Old, Old, Story"—where the Saviour's sufferings are described.

There was a most profound silence as she sang in subdued tones,

"But hush! the tale grows sadder;
I'll tell it if I can,—

"This gentle, holy Jesus,
Without a spot or stain.
By wicked hands was taken,
And crucified and slain.

"Look, look, if you can bear it,
Look at your dying Lord !
Stand near the Cross and watch Him,
' Behold the Lamb of God !'

" His hands and feet are pierced,
He cannot hide His face ;
And cruel men stand staring
In crowds about the place.

" They laugh at Him and mock Him !
They tell Him to come down,
And leave that cross of suffering,
And change it for a crown.

" Why did He bear their mocking
Was He the mighty God ?
And could He have destroyed them
With one almighty word ?

" Yes, Jesus *could* have done it ;
But let me tell you why
He *would* not use His power,
But chose to stay and die.

" He had become our surety,
And what we could not pay
He paid *instead*, and *for us*,
On that one dreadful day.

" For *our* sins He suffered,
For *our* sins He died ;
And not for ours only,
But all the world's beside.

" And now the work is finished
The sinner's debt is paid ;
Because on Christ the Righteous
The sin of all was laid.

“Oh ! wonderful redemption,
God’s remedy for sin !
The door of Heaven is open,
And you may enter in !

“For God released our ‘Surety’
To show the work was done,
And Jesu’s resurrection
Declared the victory won !”

There was a distinct sob from her little audience as Daisy paused. Then, while deep feeling held her hearers spellbound, Daisy spoke sweetly and tenderly,—

“This is all true, dear people, and it may be the greatest joy and comfort of *your* lives, or it may be, it must be, your greatest sorrow ; for if you refuse to believe this ‘Old, Old Story,’ if you *choose* to die in your sins with *such* a Saviour yours if you had only sought Him, what woe, what desolation are before you !”

Then waxing warmer each moment, Daisy unconsciously clasped her hands together and pleaded,—

“God loves you *so* much ! ‘He willeth not,’ our Bible tells us, ‘that any should perish.’ If you *will* remain disobedient and wicked, and because of that, as a matter of course, *unhappy*, it

is *your own fault*. You choose this. God does not choose it for you. The very fact of your being unhappy, unsatisfied, is proof that God wants you. The Holy Spirit is calling you. Oh ! do not quench the Spirit. Why *will* you try and forget all this ? Do some of you men think to drown these better longings, these *Sunday* desires, as some one has called them, in a few pints of ale ? Silly, silly men ! you cannot deprive these longings of their life ; you may stupefy them in drink to-day, but they will be as much yours in your sober moments to-morrow as ever they were before ; and each day's delay will make it all the more difficult to get them satisfied ; because you become less and less awake to the pleadings of the good Spirit which bids you seek God's face and live. Only one way to seek it, you know. The Lord Jesus Christ has told us, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' Ah ! and He has told us, too, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out !' Is not *that* glorious ? Not one here need fail to get to God. The Lord Jesus will cast no one out that comes to Him !

"You women smiled just now when I spoke to

your husbands about drink. Now I think you are going to frown when I tell you that there is an intoxication as fatal to a woman's soul as drink is to all who indulge in it; I mean the intoxication of foolish reading, gossiping one with another, and of dress. Why, the other day, when I came unexpectedly into one of your houses, what did I find? Seven women all huddled up together listening to one of you—she is not here to-day, I wish she were—while she read a foolish sensational story from one of the lowest papers that is published! How do I know? Because you were all so much interested that I hoped you were listening to something good, so I stopped at the door before I knocked to hear what it was about, hoping I might get good too! But you remember what horrible rubbish it was: I was obliged to let you know I was there, because I felt I dared not listen to any more, nor let you listen. Ah, this is a fatal intoxication to many a woman's soul! My dear friends, *burn* these bad papers (those you have in the house), and never let another come within your doors.

“If a neighbour had lost her child in scarlet

fever, and brought the little frock she had worn while ill and placed it in your home, what would you do? Burn it indignantly lest some infection might come to you or to yours! This is what you must do with bad books and bad papers of all kinds. They have killed *somebody's* soul, and they might kill yours or your children's!

"Then as to the gossiping. Well, I must be careful not to reveal secrets. Doubtless some of our homes would be a little happier if less time were spent in talk and more in tidying; and I am sure that it would be a wise plan to lock up your lips whenever you felt inclined to talk to your neighbours about the secrets of your own home life. I remember reading once of a woman who gave this piece of advice to a friend who had been lamenting to her her sorrows because of her husband's unkindness. 'My dear,' said she, 'whenever you feel overburdened, go on your knees and talk to God about it; it will save you telling any one else.' Will *you* try that plan?

"Then about the thought and time we waste on dress. Oh! I suppose all will plead a little guilty to this. But what if it makes us *lose our*



souls? We are not a *little guilty* only then, are we? Mothers, do teach your girls to be sensible. Where we stayed last year at the sea-side there was a maid-of-all-work, who rose at five each morning and did not get to bed until past twelve at night. She earned twelve pounds a year: and while we were there she took her month's wages,—one pound,—and what do you think she did with it? Her father was out of work and her mother very delicate, worn and weary for want of sleep because the baby (the youngest of seven) was sickly. What do you think Hannah did with her pound? She had very few clothes herself, and what she did possess were terribly in rags underneath, where nobody would see them. Hannah bought a new black hat with a long ostrich feather, for which she paid eighteen shillings and sixpence. When we reasoned with her about this waste of her money, she pouted and said, 'Mother always likes us to look nice *outside!*'

"Oh, mothers, mothers! it might be said of you, too, I do believe: and you are all the while placing a great snare and temptation in the way

of those you love so dearly and long so earnestly to see well off in life. Who is truly 'well off' but the man or woman who has God for his best friend? Oh! *do* think of this, all of you; nothing less than this can bring lasting happiness!"

Then Daisy spoke of the "Prodigal Son," having such possession of her audience's attention that she did not like to disperse her little meeting. She at length closed by singing another hymn, "I will arise and go to my father," and repeating very earnestly, sentence by sentence, followed by all present, a short prayer.

"My! but isn't it wonderful to hear her talk?" said one of the men outside,—his pipe had long since gone out and been placed in his breast pocket,—"You see she don't belabour us poor folks and take for granted the rich ones are all right!"

"Guess there's a good bit of truth in her remarks," said his companion thoughtfully, as he put his hands in his pockets and walked off. This was evidently the opinion of all, "A good bit of truth in her remarks;" but the truth is not always as palatable as fiction, and the dwellers in

New Buildings Row were not quite sure that they liked all this plain speaking; only, as one woman remarked, "There! one can put up with a *deal* of plain speaking when it gets served up to you in such a sweet way! Did you ever hear such a voice for singing? why, it would have made her fortune if she had been on the stage!"

In the meanwhile Daisy has said good-bye, and beaten a hasty retreat. Where is she off to?—Her uncle's study, to tell him, half smiling, half tearfully, that she has had another of *her* meetings amongst those *dreadful* people, and that they were all very good!

Mr. Brown was the only one to whom Daisy ever spoke of these meetings. He had his own secret anxieties about one so young undertaking a work of this description; but so long as Daisy felt *led* to do it, and the strain did not seem too great for her, he rejoiced. New Buildings Row had never had a very good name, and for the last two or three years it had become the terror of the village. His attempts at pastoral visiting had been great sources of trial to him, for unless sickness softened their hearts, or death invaded their

dwelling, he knew his visits were barely tolerated, much less heartily welcomed. Hence for Daisy to find her way amongst them when in health and strength,—for Daisy to carry to their very homes the message they would not go to church to hear, how could Mr. Brown do other than rejoice?

As he kissed Daisy's burning cheek that day he whispered, "Bravo, darling! Go on wherever the way opens. Do not *force* the way at any time, lest you lose what you most desire to win!" and Daisy felt encouraged, and never was her quiet Bible study more enjoyed than when after a meeting such as this she sought the solitude of her own room, and read again for her own heart-comfort and strengthening "the story of the Cross."

And here I must pause to ask, Do my readers think it strange a young girl of eighteen could find courage and speech wherewith to address an audience of village men and women of the roughest type? Let the fact of many gentle Christian girls to-day *doing the very same thing* be an answer to any one who doubts the possibility. True, they are not to be found in every

village, nor in every town ; *but why are they not ?* The gentle Christian girls are there. Why are they not doing work similar to that which Daisy Snowflake did ? *Because they fail to realize that it lies within their power.*

It is to awaken such to their privileges and responsibilities, and, it may be, to realize the possession of their own individual power, that this peep behind the scenes in Daisy's life is given. Had I thought to shirk criticism and to spare the censure "overdrawn and improbable," Daisy Snowflake would doubtless have been presented to the reader as an earnest Christian girl, "zealous of good works," and no further details would have been given. But my story would only be half told if I failed to suggest to others that "what has been done, may be done," since Daisy Snowflake is not the only Christian girl in possession of a loving heart and a good voice who yearns to do something for her fellow-creatures in raising their thoughts and life from earth to heaven.

And what of Mrs. Brown in the six years over which our story passes without comment or detail ?

She had had no return of her "malady," but she

had kept almost entirely to the house, never left by herself. "Let some one always be with her,"—this had been Dr. Watson's advice six years ago when she left the Highland Home; and Mr. Brown, and all in the secret, had been most careful to carry out the advice given.

Those who had known Mrs. Brown in past years said she was greatly changed, that she had grown sad even to melancholy; but to Linda she was the same "dear, good, sweet, and loving mother" as of old, and to Daisy the same kind aunt who was always most anxious for her happiness and welfare, and—who might at any moment be ill again.

And now one of those events happened which the sceptical say only occur in books, but which the earnest and thoughtful, those who go through life with eyes and ears open, know to be strangely within the limits of possibility.

Dr. Allen advertised for a partner, and Gerald Coultonsby answered the advertisement.

XI.

DR. COLLTONSEY.

XI.

DR. COULTONSBY.

"He is the happy man, whose life even now
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come."

HE scarcely seemed a day older. Daisy met him in the village the afternoon of his arrival. She stopped to shake hands with him, and laughed at his startled look as he surveyed her in astonished admiration.

"I scarcely recognized you," he said by way of apology. "Remember, six years make a great difference. How well you are looking, and—forgive me—but how happy you are looking also!"

"Life expands and makes room for more of the fulness of joy," said Daisy, with a beaming smile.

"And has the 'Whatsoever' covered *all* your needs?" asked Dr. Coultonsby, anxiously.

"I think so—I hope so," said Daisy, and her face looked suddenly very grave; "but please go on

praying," she added, eagerly. "I am sure now that—

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of."

An inquiry after Linda, Miss Humphreys, and the rector, and Gerald Coultonsby had raised his hat and retraced his steps to Dr. Allen's house, where he was to reside until his own was ready.

In due course of time he called at the Rectory, and saw Mrs. Brown and Linda. He was as much surprised at the development from girlhood to womanhood of the latter as he had been in the case of Daisy. Possibly Linda's beauty attracted him more, but he missed the thoughtful look in her eyes which he discovered in her cousin's.

"And do you still preach, Dr. Coultonsby?" asked Linda, laughing a little consciously, as she put the question.

"Yes, when I take my summer holiday," was the instant reply, "and on all other occasions which fit in with my life and work. I have been in America for two years, you know, and one year I was travelling in the East with an afflicted noble-

man, who has since died, so I have not been able to have any very settled plans."

"Are your sisters quite well?" inquired Linda, after a rather awkward pause. She would not have liked to confess it, but she really felt a little afraid of Dr. Coultonsby,—he had taken his London M.D. a year ago.

"Yes, thank you," said Gerald; "one is married, and the other one is coming to keep house for me until I am married, unless someone steals her from me in the meanwhile."

Dr. Coultonsby made this announcement quite naturally, and having chatted on upon indifferent subjects for a little while, he rose to leave. The rector at this moment came in, and gave him a very friendly greeting to the neighbourhood (he had missed seeing him when calling upon him upon his arrival), assuring him of a kindly welcome at the rectory whenever he cared to look in.

"Not," said the rector, "that I expect you to have much spare time, for Dr. Allen's practice is a very extensive one; but I do not want you to confine your visits to us to professional ones. Dr. Allen has always been a welcome guest here, and

has had many a good opportunity of studying our constitutions when in health, which may have been more or less helpful to him when we needed him in sickness." The rector spoke half in joke, half in earnest.

"We need not expect much of Dr. Coultonsby's spare time," said Mrs. Brown to her husband after the doctor had gone; "he spoke of his marriage—that is to say, he said his sister would keep his house until he was married, which implied the likelihood. I am glad there is a prospect, for now that our girls are getting older——"

"Mamma!" interrupted Linda, "*please* do not take us into your thoughts whenever an unmarried man comes in our way. Do you suppose that we, either of us, intend leaving this *dear* old home for another for fifty years to come?" and Linda threw her arms round her mother's neck, and kissed her much as she had done when quite a little girl. Yes, Linda was still a child, with all her pretty, impulsive, and wilful little ways.

"*You* are not likely to leave us at present," said her mother, laughing, "if you adhere to your resolution of remaining single until you are eighty!"

But then you know there is Daisy to think of, and she has made no such rash vow!"

Dr. Coultonsby's coming to the village was the subject of no small interest for many miles round, not to say excitement. His fame as a preaching doctor had gone before him, and while old-fashioned parents—who came of a very strict Conservative stock—shook their heads and wondered what Dr. Allen had been thinking about to stake the well-being of his magnificent practice upon the very hazardous introduction of so unorthodox a partner into the firm, prophesying the immediate breaking up of his good connection, the young ladies tittered to themselves and said it was "awfully amusing," "quite a sensation;" while a few very sensible people said they were glad Dovedale was getting its share of the good things which the more religious thought of the age, as compared with fifty or sixty years ago, had brought about.

In the first six months after Dr. Coultonsby came, he did very much what any other doctor in his place would have done,—worked hard, visited wherever he was asked,—and, but that there

were stories floating about as to his earnestness when he was with people who were dying, often kneeling beside them in prayer, he occupied the very same position in the neighbourhood as his partner Dr. Allen, with the advantage of being some twenty-five years his junior.

After all, Miss Coultonsby did not come to keep his house. There had been some secret attachment between herself and a young lieutenant, which, when tested by the contemplated project of removal to Dovedale to be housekeeper to her brother, had assumed the more serious form of an engagement, and within three months had terminated in a "round, round ring and wedding cake."

The young doctor had shrugged his shoulders and said, "*Telle est la vie*;" viewing with great and praiseworthy calmness the utter wreck—and love had brought about the ruin—of one of the few castles he had built in the air. The doctor was eminently a practical man. In this instance he had given the reins to imagination, and pictured a very happy home with his sister presiding as hostess. The sudden destruction of the castle was, therefore, a great disappointment.

When the doctor had been about eight months at Dovedale, he began a Sunday afternoon service in an old barn, which he had rented and made in some way suitable for meetings, at the end of the village, near the boat-house. He had talked his scheme over with the rector, and gained his full consent. This consent was made evident to the outside world generally by Mr. Brown taking part in the first service.

That first service was interesting for many reasons.

Daisy had gone with her uncle to help in the singing. The whole village turned out ; but as to *turn out* and to *get in* were two very different matters, it ended in one-half of the people finding themselves outside instead of inside the barn. At this point the doctor threaded his way from one to the other of those seated—first to the Misses Smith, who had come as *a great condescension*, for they were “too strict in their Church views to feel any sympathy with unordained preachers ;” then to the squire of a neighbouring village, who, with his wife and three simpering daughters (who wore massive fringes upon their foreheads,

and whose dresses were so tight that they found it very difficult to get down quite as far as the low form), had come just to *patronize* the young doctor. "It did not do to be proud, it was nice to be friendly," the squire had said, patting his capacious chest, while the girls had said in unison, "Yes, dear papa, we will put on 'something that will not hurt,' and come too ;" and the mother had looked a little uneasy (she suffered from dyspepsia, and always took a melancholy view of things), and said, "Be sure you take some smelling salts, and we must trust to Providence that we will not catch smallpox or scarlet fever."

To these, and a few more of the audience who decidedly looked a little out of place in that barn, Dr. Coultonsby advanced. The squire smiled pleasantly to himself, and said,—to himself only, of course,—“He has come to thank us for being here ; well, a very right and proper thing for him to do.” Advancing courteously, and speaking in an undertone, the doctor said to all in turn,—

“This meeting is intended for the poor ; there are numbers outside unable to get in, would you kindly let them have your seats ?”

In the case of the squire's family one of the girls immediately fainted, and her father and mother and sisters led her out, and did not come back again. "It would never have done," she explained afterwards, "just to have walked out as if the squire's presence had after all been treated as the presence of an anybody! She saw her sisters were not prepared to faint, so she did it herself, and she knew that their going out created quite a sensation. But if she lived to be a hundred, she would never like the doctor again—never, never!"

Why not?

Because Dr. Coultonsby had said aloud to her mother, as they laid her on the grass at the door of the barn,—

"Undo her stays, please; this is the result of tight-lacing. When *will* young ladies learn that nipped-in waists are as unhealthy as they are ugly!"

"Rather stiff that, doctor," said a man in the crowd who overheard the remark; while the chemist's daughters standing near, pinched each other's arms and secretly resolved to make some

alteration in the order they had given their dressmaker about their dark blue poplin costumes.

Dr. Coultonsbys soon filled in the seats, vacated by the squire and his family and others, with the poorest from the crowd outside. Then the door was propped open, to enable those on the other side to hear.

And the service began. Very earnest and impressive, very simple, very soothing.

The doctor said, after reading a chapter,—there had been singing and prayer,—

“I am amongst you to-night, dear friends, as the doctor of many of you. Now you know what brings you to me: you are ill, and want to be well; and you know what brings me to you, you are laid by and I have come to try and cure you.

“Now I am going to talk to you to-night about the Good Physician, the soul's doctor. You know, with all the skill and care possible, the most clever doctor on earth cannot keep your bodies alive when the time has come for you to die; but the Good Physician can keep

your souls alive for ever. Only first they must be healed of a bad disease, which sooner or later, if not cured, brings death to every one. This disease is called sin. And everybody has it, old and young, rich and poor, kings and princes, chimney-sweeps and scavengers.

“You know what it is to have what is called ‘consumption in the family.’ The father and mother were consumptive, and all the children inherit it. Now we inherit sin, the consumption of the soul, just in the same way from our parents Adam and Eve. When God made Adam and Eve, they had nothing the matter with them, their souls were healthy and strong, and might always have been so, if they would have done what God told them to do—if they had obeyed Him. But an enemy came to tempt them to disobedience; and instead of being so full of the thought of obeying the great and holy God, and, because they had but this one thought of doing what He had told them, determined not to listen for a moment to any one who asked them to do what He had said they must *not do*,—instead, I say, of being whole-heartedly loyal to God, they

listened to the enemy, and just heard what he had to say.

“Ah! this listening to evil is the first step to ruin to-day, as it was then. Young man, do not *listen* to the voice of temptation in whatever form it comes to you : if a bad book, *put it down* as you would poison ; if an evil companion, *shun him* as you would the fever ; if an unholy appetite, down upon your knees and overcome it !

“Well now, our parents listened to the tempter, looked at the fruit which they had been forbidden to eat, took it, held it in their hands, and then ate it. Eve did all this first, and then she gave to Adam, and he ate too ; and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the soul of our parents became diseased with sin. They had cut themselves off from God and life and health by disobeying their Maker.

“What a forlorn condition to be placed in ; what a hopeless state for the human race ! Yes, but for God's love we should all have been for ever lost. But He loved and pitied our first parents, and all of us yet to be born, and He made a way by which this sin might be taken out of the soul :

‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

“The Lord Jesus, God’s Son, died for us, to atone for (or put away) our sin, and He is the Good Physician who alone has power to heal us.

“Now, my friends, will you come to Him to be healed? You know sometimes we doctors have to tell you very plainly ‘we cannot cure your malady, but we will do our best to patch you up for a time.’ Now the Good Physician will never say that to you; what He does He does thoroughly. You have but to come to Him and He will heal you entirely, not patch you up for a time. He will put your sin all away and give you a new heart, so that sin will become hateful to you, and to love and please Him will be the first thought of your life.

“My dear friends, who will come to-night? Do you remember when the boatman’s little boy, the joy of his dear mother’s heart, and the admiration of all of us who knew him,—(Bless the little darling with his long curls and bonny blue eyes, I think I see him now!),—do you remember him

falling into the water last autumn? His mother does, I know; and so, alas, do I! And do you remember how his baby voice was heard calling in frightened tones, "Save *Donny*, save *Donny*!" as he struggled with the water? And do you remember how one of the brave village lads ran to the rescue? But he was just a minute too late. He saw the darling rise for the last time, his baby hands together, as if in prayer, his eyes gazing heavenwards, with a calm, seraphic expression upon his little face. The lad Joe Scrivens—we all know him—dived after him, and brought him to the shore, but life was extinct. Who can ever forget the sorrow in the village when the news of that bonny child's death was carried from mouth to mouth?

"My friends, we are all like that perishing child; but are we all as eager to be saved? Do we cry aloud to be saved from the danger which threatens us? See, see there is one who runs to our cry—the Lord is my helper!—see, see how He, with the blessed Hands which once were nailed to the cross for us when He died in our stead,—see how He reaches down to lift us up out of the

waters which threaten to engulf us, to put us in a safe place. No being a moment only too late in His case. Forgiveness of sins is *waiting* for us, and our cry for salvation is our taking possession and making our own that which is ours already.

“But oh! suppose we do not have this desire, and we sink lower and lower into the waters of sin, and never once cry out to be delivered, oh! how sad and sorrowful the fact! Blind to our danger, or, if knowing it, choosing to die. Do you not think the angels weep—as we wept over our little village darling—when they see us dead, lost for ever to our dear home in heaven, silent to all eternity to the heart of our loving Father? Yes! and they know that we have died not by accident but by choice: ‘God willeth not that any should perish.’

“My dear friends, you will not, you *cannot* choose death! You know you are longing for something to change you from what you are. That longing is the pleading of the Holy Spirit: it is only as it were an echo in your heart of the voice of the good and loving God calling you to Himself.”

Then Dr. Coultonsby told them that the end of

salvation was to make them God's children. That not only would they thus be made ready to go to heaven when they died, but they would be made *able* to live a good, a happy, and a useful life here in this world; working for God, whatever their station or position, by bringing others to seek the Lord Jesus.

Then came an appeal to awake from the sleep of death, to *forsake* their pet sins, to flee straight to Christ for forgiveness, and, being forgiven and cleansed, to *obey* Him as Master, and to learn of Him as Teacher.

Allusion was made to the power of drink as being one of the enemy's greatest temptations, and very touchingly, with pleading as gentle as possible, did the doctor urge all present—Christians or others—to have nothing to do with strong drink.

There were but very few dry eyes in the meeting when the address ended. Mr. Brown was quite overcome. Daisy felt thrilled with a new sense of life. Everything, as it did when she last listened to Dr. Coultonsby, seemed so *real*. It *felt* so true.

The people dispersed very slowly, giving many

a backward look, with a lingering gaze of positive tenderness, towards the young doctor. Another moment or two and the doctor had passed through their midst and gone up towards the village. He had missed one face there that afternoon,—the face of Joe Scrivens' father.

John Scrivens' door stood on the latch. With a gentle tap the doctor entered, and passed through the front room into the kitchen.

"Anything wrong, Scrivens?" he asked, as he noticed the man's dejected figure leaning over the table looking at something he held in his hand.

"Oh! sir, I'm well-nigh crushed!" he said, weeping as men only weep—a soft, silent shedding of tears with an occasional sob. "Look ye here, sir, and oh, but what a bonny lassie she was when I wed her!"

Dr. Coultonsby glanced down to that which Scrivens held in his hand, and discovered it to be a packet of pawn-tickets.

"Look ye here, sir," continued Scrivens, not changing either voice or position, "do you see that ticket? It is the dear old clock which I bought down in the village yonder the Saturday

night as we were married on the Sunday: it was to be a bit of surprise to my wife, and eh! but how hard I had worked to get it!"

And Scrivens rubbed his coat-sleeve across his eyes.

"And this one," he went on to say, taking another ticket from the little heap which had fallen from his hand on to the table,—“this one is the old plaid shawl which my mother gave her because Joe was born in winter time, and she felt the cold to her shoulders so. It was a bran-new one, and cost a good bit of mother's savings. Ah! and many an one of our babes has been sheltered from the cold blast of the east winds as it cuddled up underneath anigh its mother's breast!"

Another sob, and then Scrivens began again. He had reached the climax of his woe this time. He held out a ticket at arm's length, then drew it nearer, then put it further back, then burst into passionate weeping, and buried his face in his hands, the pawn ticket lying quite close to his cheek.

"Don't give way, Scrivens, my man," said the doctor, with all the tenderness of a woman, placing his arm almost round the weeping man's neck.

"Yes, but, sir," said Scrivens, in a low, moaning voice, "you cannot think how it takes the spirit out of a man! Oh! no one could believe but them who endures it. The ring—the wedding ring—which I placed with my own hand upon my bonny lassie's finger—the ring which calls to mind the brightness of that cloudless day—the ring which was always on her hand washing days, bread-making days, sewing times, and Sundays, which the babies as they came learnt to play with and kiss—gone, sir—gone side by side with the other things in the pawnbroker's shop! Eh! sir;" and Scrivens almost ground his teeth; "if it had but been something that one could *get at* and trip up as one might a foe that had a body, I'd try the strength of my muscles upon him, but being only a sly, deadly, *unbodily* something, one can't get at it; we can only call it 'that *awful* drink,' and weep to think that all the hard words we may say don't move it a bit, nor them that likes it!"

The doctor scarcely knew how to comfort poor Scrivens. He hit upon the wisest plan, however.

"Seeing it is *the drink*," said he, "and not *the*

wife that is responsible for all this, you will not be too hard upon her, Scrivens! You must try to forgive her!"

"Hard upon her, poor darling!" repeated Scrivens, and his voice from being harsh and grating was mellow with suppressed feeling,—
"hard upon *her*! No, not while John Scrivens has a heart to love! It is because I love the poor darling so that it *cuts* so badly. Forgive her? Ay, indeed,—with *such* a merciful Saviour ever forgiving the likes of me, how *could* I do anything else!"

The doctor saw that the time had come to turn his attention in a practical direction.

"What will you do with these tickets?" he asked.

"Do with them?" answered Scrivens; "why, grind away until I have redeemed the things one by one, and then as I get them I will lay them at my darling's feet and see if I can win her back again by my love;—as the good Saviour Himself wins us poor wanderers back to Himself!" and for the moment a holy light rested upon John Scrivens' face like the after-glow of

sunset; the sunset of his heart's noble thought giving to his face this glorious light.

"Where is your wife?" asked the doctor, as a long pause came.

"In bed, sir," answered Scrivens; "Joe and me carried her there an hour ago, and I stayed at home to be a sort of watch-dog, and keep her foes—a pack of women, Mother Hawkins at the head of them—from coming to her with the drink!"

"How did your wife grow to love it, Scrivens?" said the doctor, rising from the chair upon which he had been sitting for the last few moments, and standing by the little fire-place with his elbow upon the mantel-piece.

"The lady for whom she worked as char-woman and the like taught it her," said Scrivens. "She learnt it up at the Rectory, sir, only we don't talk about *where*. She would bring her a glass of spirits and water on frosty mornings while she was busy with her work, and say, 'It will do you good—take it, you have no need to be afraid of it!' Oh! sir, it's my belief that hundreds of the poor drunken creatures to-day who would give worlds to be delivered from their drink curse,

learnt to love it either in service or when going out for the day's work after they got married ! If only ladies *would* give it a thought. It isn't what they actually give a poor creature, but it's the habit like ; for if, says they to themselves,—if spirits are good to strengthen us when we work for the mistress, it stands to reason they are good for us at home in our hard work with but indifferent food ; so there's a *thought habit* got into, and when a woman has once got a thought in her brain, it takes a deal to turn her ! Why, they say women's brains are shallower than ours ; I take it that it's their *depth* that makes the difficulty,—the thought gets so *into* the brains that there is no getting it out again."

The doctor spent a full hour with Scrivens, and then went home to praise and prayer and thought.

XII.

WHY DR. ALLEN WAS NOT A TEETOTALER.

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“What is virtue but a vice withstood,
Or sanctity, but daring sin o’ercome?”

“If there’s a power above us,
He must delight in virtue; and that
Which he delights in must be happy.”

THE next day the doctor had his first real talk upon total abstinence with his partner Dr. Allen. They were sitting together in the little summer-house of the senior partner’s garden; Dr. Allen was smoking a cigar, Dr. Coultonsby, who did not believe in smoking any more than he did in drinking, was sitting with his legs crossed enjoying a few moments’ interval in the busy day of visiting and receiving patients.

He put the question plainly, without any preamble by way of introduction—

“Doctor Allen, why are you not a teetotaler?”

“Simply,” said that gentleman, knocking off the

ashes of his cigar with the tip of his little finger,—
“simply, my dear fellow, because it wouldn't pay.”

“Wouldn't pay!” repeated Dr. Coultonsby in a surprised tone; “how do you mean?”

“In this way,” continued Dr. Allen, giving a puff at his cigar between each sentence; “the doctor is always an authority with his patients. If I become a total abstainer on the score of health,—as common sense and scientific reasoning tell me I ought to do,—my patients would adopt total abstinence too, and—” (there were two puffs of the cigar here, and the consequence was that the remainder of the sentence came with increased force because of the longer pause)—“and if this were so, *bang* goes two-thirds of my practice!

“I am not alluding to those who drink to excess,” continued he, resting the hand which held the cigar upon his knee, “because they live too short a time to be very remunerative patients, added to the fact that, having given their money to the brewer or wine merchant, they have but little left for the doctor. I am speaking of the so-called moderate drinkers, who, in taking a small quantity of alcohol daily, fever the blood, disorder



the digestive organs, and set up an irritability in the system generally which predisposes if it does not absolutely lead to a hundred and one small ailments which keep *us* going, and which bring us in no small portion of our income; for unlike the drunkards, moderate drinkers can generally afford to pay well!"

Dr. Coultonsby arched his eyebrows, while Dr. Allen continued :

"Some time ago I read a little Temperance paper called 'The Fools' Pence,' in which a drunkard is brought to see the folly of spending his money in drink by the landlady of his public-house telling him, in answer to a question of his, that all her elaborate furniture and comfortable clothing came out of the fools' pence; and I have often thought that a similar paper might be written about doctors' broughams and luxuries generally supplied by the fools' pence gathered in from the moderate-drinking patients!"

"You surprise me," said Dr. Coultonsby, looking very greatly astonished.

"Yes," continued Dr. Allen, "and I go further; I say when I hear the publicans and brewers

talking about 'compensation,' in the event of public-houses being put down,—I say that we have as great a claim for damages as they; for I am quite certain, that if all England became teetotalers to-morrow, we doctors as a class would be pretty considerable losers!"

Dr. Allen was called away at this moment to speak to a patient, so Dr. Coultonsby rose also. His senior partner turned back a step or two, and said in a friendly tone, smiling quietly,—

"Had I known *before* you came that *you* were a teetotaler, I should have felt it to be an obstacle to your coming, but when once you were here, and I found it out, I made up my mind to put up with it." And Dr. Allen went off very quickly, not leaving his junior partner time for a reply.

But later in the evening they resumed the conversation, Dr. Allen himself starting it.

"I cannot think why men and women are such fools," he said; "when you come to look into this subject, the facts are most convincing. Take the Insurance statistics, for instance. For some twenty-five years, or so, investigations have been made by some reliable authorities, and it is positively as-

served that upon an average the teetotaler lives twenty-five years longer than a moderate drinker ! Take again our twenty thousand prisoners who at a moment's notice are deprived of strong drink, and see the immediate rise in the improved condition of their health ! I tell you, that as a man of sense I cannot come to any other conclusion than that total abstinence is the *right* thing, the *wise* thing, and the *best* thing ; but while I have ten sons and daughters more or less dependent upon me for support and placing out in life, I feel that *I* am not the right person to proclaim these facts." (The doctor had married late in life, and felt the burden of a large young family as men of fewer years would not be so likely to feel it.)

Dr. Coultonsby ventured to plead for a higher motive than the seeking of personal interest ; but Dr. Allen said he had merely accepted a condition of things handed down to him by his medical ancestry. *He* could not be personally responsible for the subtle dealing of the age.

" I will make one admission," added Dr. Allen, seeing his young partner's evident disquietude of

mind after hearing his views thus plainly put; "*I do not order it as I used to do.* Mark you, I am not a villain! I do not *want* to make people ill for the sake of keeping my practice going. I hold that what I have confessed to you to-day fifty medical men out of every hundred would confess to you, if driven by an honest man to give a reason as I have been driven to-day; but as to *ordering* it—well, I have seen the awful risk. I have myself attended cases of *delirium tremens* when every shriek went to my heart as a Nathan voice, which proclaimed, 'Thou art the man:' 'But for your ordering stimulants to us in days gone by, we should not to-day be what we have become!' And I have learnt my lesson accordingly. My sin—if sin it is—is not to-day in driving men and women to destruction by *ordering* them to take that which has such subtle power to work ruin, but in passively allowing what I know to be unhealthful and, therefore, unwise."

Gerald Coultonsby was terribly exercised in his mind by his senior partner's confession. Of course it was the confession of a worldly man from a worldly man's point of view. But there was some-

thing to him—the young doctor—so terribly saddening in the fact that professions, like some trades, were dependent for their pecuniary success upon the misfortunes or ignorances of the people. All that was noble and true in him rose up in indignant protest. *His* profession, with such magnificent possibilities of blessing, in bringing to suffering humanity the touch of healing or the alleviation of pain,—*his* profession to be on a level with the publican's trade, which, as things existed to-day, could only prosper (in the sense of being successful in a pecuniary way) by the *excess* of drinking in our country! He had read that throughout the land there was one public-house to every thirty-six families. And it did not require much calculation to prove that the *moderate* consumption of malt liquor by thirty-six families—which, of course, would include numerous children besides teetotalers—could not possibly support one public-house. No, until the whole system was changed, the trade could only be what it was commercially by an excess of drinking. Woe to the men and women who to make life answer to themselves had to literally feed on the lives—the

physical, the moral, and the spiritual—of other people! But was the medical profession to be dragged down to the same level? Was there to be a shadow of truth in the statement that doctors could not *afford* by example or counsel to recommend total abstinence? *It would not pay!* The thought was revolting in the extreme; but Gerald Coultonsby, the more he dwelt upon it, the more decidedly felt convinced that, if not *all* true, there was *some* truth in it.

He did not disguise his feelings from Dr. Allen; he even ventured a severe criticism upon the actions of any man who thought more of his family needs and interests than of the cause of truth.

"Things will right themselves in time," said Dr. Allen, speaking in a very jocular tone. "Supposing my boy, who wants to become a doctor, *does not* become one, and a like history belongs to the wishes of other people's boys, competition will grow less, or cease, and those doctors in existence would find a fair living without seeking to make up the deficiency of patients by keeping up a condition of things which might be altered so as to greatly benefit humanity at large.

Dr. Coultonsby could not help smiling at the freedom with which his friend settled everything; the interests of the doctor being the central thought rather than the cause of humanity. But he also felt that Dr. Allen was not without deeper feeling in the matter when he added,—

“I tell you what it is, Coultonsby; this question of drinking is the problem of the age, and every one who has an honest thought in the matter is helping to solve it. I do my part in telling you my opinion, which you are quite at liberty to repeat. It may help to get you a few converts; for, set sensible men and women *thinking*, and there is sure to be some good result. It is all a question of personal life: believe a thing, and you live it out; live it out, and you impress others with your belief. Legislation can never touch this great question. It rests with the people as a people, and, remember, this means with individuals as individuals!”

“True, doubtless, in a great degree,” said Dr. Coultonsby, thoughtfully; “but while the gigantic evil of drunkenness—this is quite apart from the question of *moderate* drinking—while the gigantic

evil of drunkenness exists in our land, we have a right to ask the Legislature to help us in putting it down. We are not dealing with the future in this case so much as with the immediate present. The thing exists. The thing must be removed. All the talking, all the *living* in the world will not reach the sot who spends half his day in the public-house, and who, when at home, is too much under the influence of drink to profit by what is said to him. You make a mistake, my friend, when you say legislation can do nothing! Legislation has done something in regard to Factory abuses: why not have left it for a Christian people to have worked on the sympathies of the factory owners, and have left the remedy of the evil in their own hands? Legislation has done something for the poor little chimney-sweepers: why not have done as suggested with the factory owner, brought personal influence to bear upon the little sweep's master, and so have righted the evil? Legislation has interfered on behalf of over-driven horses; it has protected cats and dogs from being tortured; it has insisted that birds and fish must be well looked after,—salmon are pro-

tected, sea-birds are not to be unduly destroyed. All this legislation has taken upon itself to do; and shall not our own flesh and blood, our husbands and brothers, our wives and daughters, our little ones, *your* children, Dr. Allen,—shall they not have all the protection that legislation can secure them against an evil greater than the torture of animals or the greedy destruction of birds?"

Dr. Allen was in an argumentative mood, and would doubtless have replied at some length to his partner's speech, had they not at that moment been disturbed by the arrival of the rector, who not unfrequently called at this late hour for a "parish talk" with his old friend Dr. Allen.

Dr. Allen had just time to say to Dr. Coultonsbey, "Do not tell the rector what we have been talking about, the subject is rather painful to him," when Mr. Brown was shown in.

XIII.

"THE OTHER GROCERY."



XIII.

"THE OTHER GROCERY."

"Guard every thought :
Who thinks himself secure is half undone ;
For sin, unwatched, may reach the sanctuary,—
'Tis not the place preserves us."

THE following spring, Mr. Brown, who had long been failing in health, went abroad for three months. He had secured the services of a brother clergyman, Mr. Reynolds, who, being a bachelor, took up his residence with Dr. Coultonsby, they having been college friends in the well-remembered and much quoted "Oxford days."

Linda shared her mother's room during her father's absence. This had been his wish. Ever since her residence in the Highland Home, Mr. Brown had kept constant watch over his wife. He never left her many minutes of the day by herself. An arrangement was made between himself and Daisy and the faithful Margaret that one or other

should always be at hand, to sit with her, read to her, or walk out with her. Linda was unconsciously taken into the arrangement, although she herself knew nothing of this skilful planning: but if she chose to remain at home with her mother, then Daisy was free to go out; but if she elected to go out, then Daisy, or her substitute Margaret (supposing Mr. Brown to be engaged), would stay with Mrs. Brown. To make this constant companionship secure during his absence, Mr. Brown had insisted that Linda should sleep with her mother. Mrs. Brown said it was a pity to separate the two girls,—who still shared one room; it was a very spacious one, overlooking a long stretch of country,—but her husband said he should not like to think of his wife as being lonely, or requiring anything in the night with no one immediately at hand to attend to her. And he also pleaded, that as he was leaving home for his health's sake, it would tend greatly to his own comfort and rest if his wife yielded to his wishes in regard to this matter. And thus it was settled.

One night, about the middle of May, it was too hot to sleep, and Linda and her mother lay awake

talking for some time. At length Mrs. Brown, said, heaving a deep sigh, "I feel miserably weak. What a comfort a glass of champagne would be at this moment!"

"Yes, would it not?" said Linda, enthusiastically. "What a pity we are all teetotalers! I always did say it was nonsense, only papa wished it!"

Then she added, "Wait until the morning, mother, and I will get you some—quite on the quiet, or we should shock our pious Daisy!" and Linda laughed merrily, and turned and buried her face in the pillow.

"But *where* could you get it?" asked Mrs. Brown, excitedly; "I should not quite like you to go to——"

"The grocer's? Nothing more easy," said Linda, and she laughed again. "I shall just go and order the sugar as usual—Demerara now mind, Mr. Jones, only Demerara will do—and then quite accidentally I will say, 'By the way, you keep champagne, I think; send in half-a-dozen bottles when you send *the other grocery!*' Grand—done all in a moment; and we are not opening an account at the wine

merchant's. For the matter of that, if you think papa would prefer it, we could enter the champagne as soap and soda and such like."

Linda rattled on far more in fun than in earnest. But every word was full of earnestness to Mrs. Brown. The suggestions so unconsciously given answered a question which Mrs. Brown had had in her mind for many months past—namely, how to get stimulants without attracting the attention, and because of that incurring the displeasure, of her husband. His very firm refusal to allow her to take the most moderate quantity she had long believed to be utterly needless, in regard to the fear of the moderate quantity inducing excess. If she could keep entirely without it for so many years, the appetite for excess had died a natural death, and now surely she would be free to take a little and stop there like any other rational creature.

It was only occasionally that the desire to take that little seized her, and at such times, if she pleaded with her husband for the gratification of her wish, his stern rebuke terrified her into silence, especially when coupled with the assertion that Linda must be told all if she for

one moment entertained the thought of drinking stimulants again.

Linda told ! No, never, never. The fear of losing Linda's love was even stronger than the desire for stimulants, and the wish had been utterly silenced by the threat. But her husband was away—she was free so far—and Linda was not opposed to the thought of having the stimulant, as she might have been ; nay, she herself was making the very suggestion ; which, if carried out, would remove the only difficulty which now that Mr. Brown was absent seemed to stand in the way.

Mrs. Brown was exultant ! Now she would have an opportunity of proving to her husband that his fears were lack of trust, his suspicions mean, his threats unmanly. She would not tell him all at once when he returned, she would let it grow upon him gradually, and when he found how well she was, how *much* stronger than when he left home, he would generously yield, and there would be an end of the matter.

All this Mrs. Brown decided upon as she lay awake during the long hours of that night, Linda

at length sleeping calmly and sweetly by her side. If her own heart misgave her for a moment, she called herself a foolish, weak-minded woman. If the remembrance of her past experience came before her, to remind her of what had been, and, by logical inference, what might be again, she laughed herself free from the doubt involved, saying to herself, "East winds are not good for delicate lungs, but who would stay in for a lifetime when a weak lung had become quite strong again?"

The next day Mrs. Brown watched Linda's movements with feverish anxiety, all the more fevered because she sought to keep herself very calm. She kept her room until dinner-time, upon the plea of headache, hoping that Linda would be reminded of her wish for the champagne if she saw her evidently prostrate by suffering.

But Linda had forgotten all about the conversation in the night, or, at all events, it had not seemed to be of any vital importance; a sort of "any-time-will-do" feeling had taken possession of her mind regarding it; so at least her mother fancied.

Towards tea-time, when Mrs. Brown lay upon

the library couch, Linda sitting at her feet working, a sigh of fatigue from her mother made Linda start up.

"I declare I have forgotten all about the grocery order," she said, laughing. "It shows, too, mother mine, that it has escaped you also, or you would have named it: but I am off. Mind," she added, playfully holding up her finger, "not a word to Day, nor to Humphrey-thing, nor to Margaret! I can tell them all some day, when we have had our fun out of it!" And after extracting her mother's promise, Linda left the room to get her hat and gloves.

She took her time in getting to the grocer's. She did not go direct, for no particular reason, only that she liked to walk straight down the village High Street, and see who were out and who were at home of her friends and acquaintances. She stopped and shook hands with some, others she passed with a hasty nod. When she came to the grocer's, she walked by quite naturally; then, as if suddenly remembering something, she turned back and entered the shop. This she did to see if any one were there. She was beginning to feel that

she was not quite happy in doing this, not sure of her father's approval.

Mr. Jones was in his shop all alone. (His assistant had gone home to tea.) He had not been many months in Dovedale. Nobody knew his previous history. He was a very reticent man. The business had been advertised in one of the trade journals, and Mr. Jones had secured it by this means. He was believed to be a man holding atheistical views; and some people wondered why the rector patronized him. But the fact was, that the rector, in his large-hearted charity, would not turn his back upon the shop—at which he had dealt ever since he came to the village. There were only two; and the other one was kept by a local preacher, and well patronized by the dissenters: if the man did not go to church, all the more reason to show him civility and win him there. But the rector had, as he said, made no head-way with his parishioner. He had learnt as much in his first visit as he had ever learnt since,—and he gave him a call every few weeks,—which was chiefly this, that Mr. Jones had been married twice, but was now a childless widower.

"Nice day, miss," said Mr. Jones, as Linda entered the shop.

"Yes, very lovely, indeed," answered Linda; and then she stopped. Her colour came and went for a moment. She felt very nervous and uncomfortable; but she was not going to be a *coward*, so forgetting all about the Demerara sugar, she said hurriedly,—

"Do you not keep champagne?"

"Yes, miss," said Mr. Jones, briskly, "prime stuff. I can recommend it before any I have ever had in stock; will you allow me to send you up a bottle on trial?"

"Oh! no, thank you," said Linda. (She had regained her quiet manner by this time; Mr. Jones would take the order naturally enough—why should it not be given naturally? Only then Mr. Jones had no father to vex in the matter.) "You shall send us in half-a-dozen bottles, please," said Linda, as if mentally calculating the exact quantity required; "and I will pay for them, please."

"Or let me set them down, miss," said Mr. Jones, in business-like tones, "and send the bill

in with the month's grocery. Some ladies *have* preferred—" Mr. Jones hesitated a moment, then he plunged boldly into the avowal,—“ some ladies *have* preferred not letting it stand as a wine item, and I just enter it as general grocery ; would that be agreeable, miss ? Of course it comes to the same thing, only it has the advantage of keeping the item out of a bill ; and this saves unpleasantness, if servants are prone to pry into their mistress's accounts ; and I *have* known such cases—servants will talk, and the false rumours spread by gossip which *might* have been avoided ; you see my meaning, miss ; I always feel it my duty to prevent ladies being annoyed.”

Mr. Jones was a keen man of business, and, unfortunately, as unprincipled as he was business-like. He had heard rumours of Mrs. Brown's failing in previous years ; how a long account at a wine-merchant's in the village (he had since died) had been settled by Mr. Brown in monthly payments, with the warning given that he would not again be responsible for any such debt incurred. He had heard also how the wine-merchant had lost Mrs. Brown as a customer ;

while Mrs. Hawkins at the public-house, because *she* never pressed payment, but waited for Mrs. Brown to settle her accounts as, and when best, able, had secured her as *her* customer, and he had made up his mind that if ever Mrs. Brown returned to old ways and gave him a chance, he should adopt the plan he had done with many of his London customers, and have no distinct item, but mix it up in the grocery account. The plan was a capital one, (in a rogue's estimation!) and it often kept up a brisk custom, where under other circumstances discoveries would have to be made and custom stopped.

Mr. Jones's first thought in life was money-making; and having set up the tyrannical passion as his god, he sacrificed principle and honour at its shrine, and would have said with an easy conscience that all his underhand schemes came in the path of duty.

Now Linda had been entirely joking when she suggested to her mother the night before that they could enter the champagne with the other grocery. It was on her part an original piece of fun, not impossible to carry out, but the very

last thing to be imagined in real earnest. Yet because the thought *had* entered Linda's heart, and *had* found expression in words, she was in a sense hardened against the shock to all right feeling which Mr. Jones's suggestion would have produced had it been otherwise. And then as she further allowed the thought, it really did seem almost a relief to have it put to her by the grocer as a matter of expediency in regard to prying servants. It might save remark, for Linda never thought the champagne would be taken other than in secret—and of course she would explain all to her father when he came home. He might be a little troubled at first, but he would soon look upon it as a good joke.

“Alas ! what a tangled web we weave
When once we practise to deceive !”

Linda began by deceiving herself. Oh ! to what would the deception lead ?

“Thank you,” said Linda, as Mr. Jones paused. “Of course it is quite unnecessary in *our* case to resort to this thing, as we have most faithful, trustworthy servants ; still—enter it which way you like.

But supposing I take only one bottle, just to try it, and I can send you word about more another time!"

Mr. Jones was too shrewd to press the usual "Oh! allow me to send it, please." He thought he had a splendid fish nibbling at his bait, and he was very careful not to disturb the nibble in any way. If he had said he would send the wine, the chances were that Miss Brown would not have known what to say in excuse for declining his offer. Having herself offered to take it, there was no difficulty in letting her do so.

Mr. Jones disappeared into another part of the shop for a few minutes, and then returned, bearing a parcel which looked more like a drapery parcel than even a grocery one, and which had no sign of the shape of a bottle about it.

Linda eyed it with a look of interrogation upon her face.

"It is all right, miss," he said, smiling very blandly; "I have ventured to put up a packet of my specimen tea and one of a new kind of starch: they protect the neck of the bottle, and are no charge, and they do me good service as an advertisement."

Linda said "good afternoon," and wended her way home almost as slowly as she had come. Just as she reached the rectory garden she encountered Dr. Coultonsby. He stopped and shook hands with her.

"Allow me to carry your parcel through the garden," he said, politely; "not but that I admire you for carrying it yourself. It is one of the things young ladies to-day do not feel quite strong enough for!"

Linda blushed crimson. The doctor thought at the implied compliment. He took her parcel, and said playfully,—

"Not as light as a feather either," and then turned the conversation to something else.

He parted from Linda at the door. He had been in when he met her to have a little talk with Daisy about the hymns for his Sunday afternoon service.

"When are you coming to help us with the singing?" he said, as he was taking leave of Linda.

"Oh! you know I am very much with my mother," replied Linda; "and you know you say

your services are not for us, but for the poor," she added, lifting her head up with a little toss.

"I am quite willing to make you an exception," said the doctor, smiling, as he lifted his hat and passed on.

His Sunday services had become quite an institution. Miss Humphreys and Daisy were always present, to help in the singing, and the poor people continued to throng in. The teaching was so simple and earnest, so fitted to the comprehension of these humble cottagers, that it was not to be wondered at that they came again and again; while Mr. Brown had noticed a very visible increase in his congregation,—men and women in his parish whom all his entreaty had failed to bring to church had made the doctor's barn (as it was called) a sort of stepping-stone from their broken Sabbaths to the parish church. The services had greatly increased the doctor's popularity; and rumour said that Dr. Allen's books could testify that he had not done his practice any harm.

Linda found her mother lying down in her own room.

"Only *one* bottle!" said she reproachfully, as, having fastened the door, Linda, with a great deal of laughter and fun, opened her parcel.

"Well, that will last you a week or more at the rate of a glass a day," said Linda, merrily. "We really cannot afford more, mother mine, or our grocery account will be so increased that we shall need to give a reason;" and Linda took up the corkscrew which lay in readiness on the dressing-table beside two small tumblers, and very cleverly drew the cork.

Another moment, and Mrs. Brown had drunk off her first glass. Linda smiled as she watched her evident enjoyment, and refused to take any herself, lest she should have to repeat the scene at Mr. Jones's under the week.

XIV.

‘ THROUGH DEATH’S DARK NIGHT.’

XIV.

"THROUGH DEATH'S DARK NIGHT."

"There are sorrows cruel as death
Through which some pass ;
And gather hope upon the other side,
As a resurrection thought of heart and life."

THE next day Linda told her mother that after all she did not feel easy in her own mind about making a secret of getting the champagne; and that if more were wanted, it would be a good plan to send for it openly.

"I know I thought it all fun at the time," she said, as she kissed her mother tenderly; "but whenever I think of it now, I feel as if I had eaten something which had left some *grit* in my mouth."

After Linda had said this, Mrs. Brown's mind was made up: she would fetch the champagne herself.

Two days after this, Linda was lying upon the

couch in the library with a bad sick headache. Miss Humphreys and Daisy had gone to church, it being the evening of the week-night service. Mrs. Brown placed a new book upon Linda's knee which had been sent round by some friends who subscribed to Mudie's, and said as she did so,—

“I think I will take a turn or two in the garden; when you are tired of reading, you had better have a little sleep.” Linda was feeling very drowsy, and smiled in reply to her mother's suggestion, thinking that she would probably go to sleep even had she not been advised to do so.

She awoke from an uneasy sleep with a start. Her mother was closing, a little noisily, the French window through which she had just come in from the garden. Mrs. Brown's face was flushed with the exertion, and she spoke as if quite out of breath. Without looking at Linda, her hand still resting on the bolt of the window, she said,—

“I have quite enjoyed my walk. I found it so pleasant out, that I strolled on as far as Mr. Jones's shop to order some more currants,—cook said this morning that she could not make a cake, as she was out of them,—and being there, I fortunately

remembered to order him to send in a little more wine!"

"More wine? Oh! I forgot!" said Linda, only half awake. "I am glad I have not got it to do," she added, "for I still feel ashamed of my visit to Mr. Jones's."

"Nonsense, Linda," said her mother; "it is only your over-sensitiveness: he is not a man to think of a thing like that a second time."

"I hope he is not," said Linda; "but, mother, if I were to have a house of my own to-morrow, I would never deal with Mr. Jones. He seems equal to underhand ways, and—I do not think I should feel it right to encourage such a man: it might make *me* think less of what was not utterly real and good and true, to say nothing of anything else!"

Mrs. Brown did not quite catch all that Linda said. She had left the library to unload her heavy pockets in her own room. Unlocking her wardrobe, Mrs. Brown first took out a bottle of champagne, and next a bottle of brandy, from the pocket of her top skirt (these were well wrapped in paper, and their necks had been safely hidden

under the polonaise skirt). After taking them out, Mrs. Brown lifted up her dress, and literally unpacked a pillow-case full of parcels, the top of the pillow-case having been very securely pinned to the band of her under-skirt. There must have been eight or ten bottles; but each one was so carefully done up in paper that the risk of breakage had been slight. The weight must have been somewhat uncomfortable; but judging from her excited state of delight, Mrs. Brown had not felt it unduly.

She did not go down again that evening, and was fast asleep when Linda came to bed.

But that Linda continued to sleep with her mother, she saw very little of her for the next few days. The weather was most perfect, and she spent much of her time in painting, having, for an amateur, a very great gift. She was anxious to complete and get framed, as a present for her father, a most lovely view from a hill within ten minutes' walk of the rectory, where, from a certain point, the eye could glance upon five different counties. This point—a rustic gate—Linda had brought into her picture, Daisy and Miss Hum-

phreys being represented as leaning upon it in mute admiration of the scene beneath. Linda, as the painting reached completion, became more and more absorbed in it. Daisy often ran down to her to see how she was getting on ; but she herself was very busy helping Miss Humphreys in dusting books and cleaning pictures, it being the May cleaning. The faithful Margaret, too, was "as busy as a bee" on this account.

Hence it happened—as these things *will* happen, and in a way that all the wishing in the world will not afterwards make *unhappen*—Mrs. Brown was left more to herself than she had ever been in the past six years.

Dovedale Rectory stood almost within the shadow of Dovedale Church. In past years it had been no unusual thing for the house to be locked up in the evening during service-time, each member of the household coming to church. But this had not been of late ; Mrs. Brown was always at home in the evening, and some one remained with her.

It was Sunday, and Linda's turn to stop in. The day had been very balmy, and the evening

was most brilliant; the wind having changed to the east, gave a clearness to the atmosphere, and the distant view from the rectory garden was looking most perfect. Linda had left her mother lying upon her bed. She had pleaded not feeling well, and Linda had thought she seemed giddy and faint when she attempted to move, although she appeared to be in excellent spirits. Mrs. Brown had spent the whole day in her room, pleading that no one, not even Daisy or Miss Humphreys, should disturb her. Margaret had brought her dinner up, but the door was locked, and Mrs. Brown had called to her to put the tray down. Hence no one had really seen her since early morning, with the exception of Linda.

Linda, thinking her mother was likely to sleep, and knowing in her own bilious attacks what she liked best was to be left alone,—Linda sauntered round the garden, plucking the roses as she went. The church bells had long ago ceased ringing, and now through the open windows came the first hymn, sung by choir and congregation with an earnestness and sweetness which gave to the

chorus the deep utterance of a grand, whole-hearted prayer—

"Through life's long day and death's dark night,
O ! Gentle Jesus, be our light."

Tears gathered in Linda's eyes as she listened.

"If only I *could* be like Daisy!" she said to herself, as the singing at length stopped. "It is the *real* thing with her. She does not parade it, but she never hides it, and she is always so calm and patient. From the very day she first came to us she has been so sweet and so kind ; and when anything has gone wrong for the moment, she has always been the first to plead to be forgiven."

Then Linda began to think how best she could tell Daisy about her visit to Mr. Jones. She more and more hated herself for doing anything which would be likely to grieve her father. He, of course, had his reasons for preferring that no wine should be drunk at the rectory, and, in his absence, she had set his wishes at defiance ! Oh, it was mean, despicable, utterly black in its hideous untruthfulness !

Linda clenched her hands and wept. A most

unearthly scream awoke her from her reverie. It was something between a laugh and a wail. It came again and again, and it was quite near. The sound was lost for a moment in the beginning of the closing hymn at church,—

“Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near.”

These words were ringing through Linda's mind as she ran with eager haste into the house to find her mother. Supposing Mrs. Brown to be asleep, this cry would terrify her; she would at least show herself to her before going round to the back of the house to find out what it all meant: the sound came distinctly from there.

Once in the house, Linda was up to her mother's room in a moment. All was quiet there, and the door was locked. She turned the handle gently, when instantly the door was opened from the inside, and——

What did Linda see? Had she fallen asleep in the summer-house, and was she dreaming?—Mrs. Brown, but half-dressed, with a towel twisted round her head as a turban, had an empty champagne bottle in either hand, and as soon as

the door was opened went on with a dance she had evidently been having to herself before Linda came. Her face seemed to be swollen, and her eyes were blood-shot. She broke into a boisterous laugh as Linda looked at her in unmistakable horror and alarm. Then she swayed herself backwards and forwards, knocking the empty bottles together, and giving utterance to the very wail and maddened laugh combined, which Linda had heard so distinctly in the garden.

The first intelligent idea that seized Linda's brain was that her mother was insane. She did not take into consideration any thought as to how she had become so. The terribly sorrowful fact, like a glaring red flag, stood out before Linda's mind; and the next intelligent thought was, What should be done? With that quick perception which comes to all at times in moments of great excitement, Linda in a second saw what was her plan. While her mother was dancing round the room, only pausing again and again to rattle the bottles together, and to laugh at Linda's consternation, Linda slipped the key out of the door, and when her mother's back was

turned to her for a moment, left the room with the quickness of thought, and locked her mother in.

Dr. Coultonsby would be in church—just leaving probably (Dr. Allen seldom came at night)—she would stop him, tell him her mother was ill.

Voices in the garden led Linda to rush forward; the doctor was just taking leave of Daisy and Miss Humphreys.

“Doctor, doctor!” said Linda, almost breathlessly, “oh! please come quickly, mamma is out of her mind!” and without another word she turned and fled into the house again, up the stairs, and back to her mother’s room, all three following her,—the doctor first, then Daisy, then Miss Humphreys (who was not quite so fleet of foot). Mrs. Brown had heard them coming, and had thrown herself upon the bed. She still held one of the empty bottles, and was kissing it tenderly, while she wailed forth,—

“Ah! we’ve done them this time, yes, we have. Splendid, lovely, *enervating—exhilarating*, that’s the word! Well, doctor, and how are you to-day? I am quite well, and very hoping—happy’s the

word I want. Ah! ah!—ah! ah! that silly little Linda looked frightened——"

Then Mrs. Brown stopped short in what she was saying, struck her forehead, and, raising herself up in bed, said quickly, as if some new thought had come to her,—

"Take Linda away, Daisy, take her away—what right has she to be here? I'm ill, Linda, not myself, dear; I'll be better in the morning. Don't fret, poor darling! and don't ask questions."

Daisy, who had stood looking from her aunt to the doctor, her every feature denoting the wildest sorrow, drew Linda away, taking her into her own room.

Linda was deathly pale, but tearless. Daisy was weeping; she kissed her cousin tenderly as she drew her down to sit beside her on the bed, and said,—

"My poor Linda! Where could she have got it?" This was said more to herself than to Linda; but Linda replied,—

"Where could she get *what*, Daisy?"

And Daisy whispered, very, very sadly,—

"The drink, Linda."

Little did Daisy dream the agony her words would awaken in Linda's heart. Linda had up to this moment thought her mother to be insane; and in the fright of the discovery the uppermost thought had been pity. But Daisy's words brought the whole truth to her mind, and disgust and shame were the feelings which at once possessed her.

Oh! the bitter, bitter wailing of that poor girl's heart! Daisy's feelings, years ago, when *she* made the discovery, could only resemble Linda's feelings to-day as a shadow resembles a substance, an echo a full-toned sound. There was no other being in the whole world whom Linda had loved and revered, in however small a degree, in the way she had loved her mother. Dearly as she loved her father, her mother had always been first, and her affection for her had ever been of a more absorbing, more self-abandoning kind. And now——

Linda's chest heaved, but no tears, no sob came. Daisy drew her to her knees, kneeling down beside her,—

“Oh! Thou God of Love, comfort poor Linda

in this woful trial, and give her hope to look beyond the darkness *for Thy Light*, through Him, the Man of sorrows, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Then a long silence, a long, passionate clinging and embrace, and Daisy had crept away from Linda's side,—away from the room, believing that great sorrows, like great joys, are too sacred sometimes to be shared, belonging alone to the soul and to God.

* * * *

That night, while others watched and ministered to the needs of her afflicted mother, Linda sank to rest feverish and exhausted, her last thought being a prayer,—

"Through life's long day and death's dark night,
O! Gentle Jesu, be our light."



XV.

"ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH."



XV.

"ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH."

"Better to hope though the clouds hang low,
And to keep the eyes still lifted ;
For the sweet blue sky will still peep through,
When the ominous clouds are rifted.
There was never a night without a day,
Or an evening without a morning,
And the darkest hour, as the proverb goes,
Is the hour before the dawning."

AND this was Daisy's secret. It flashed across Dr. Coultonsby in a moment as he stood beside the frantic patient and heard her ravings.

"Linda, my darling! they promised not to tell her! Poor Daisy! ah, *she* knows all about it—all about it—all about it!" and then came another wild laugh and another struggle to get up, and then a groan as the doctor's strong hand held her fast; and the room was filled with bitter wailings.

* * * *

The next few days at the rectory were days of terrible anguish. Dr. Allen pronounced Mrs.

Brown's case to be hopeless. Her husband was telegraphed for. If the telegram reached him in time, he would come home by the overland route, instead of coming by sea from Constantinople. There was just the fear that he might have started by sea before the telegraphic message could reach him.

Two nurses were in charge of Mrs. Brown, relieved one by one in their watch by Margaret. Linda hovered about the door outside, but no persuasion could get her to enter. Daisy was often in the room. Her aunt frequently asked for her; and even when almost unconscious, and suffering from all the terrors of the illness, she would plead for Daisy to stand by her to ward off the creeping and unsightly things which flapped their tails or wings in her face.

Dr. Coultonsbey watched Daisy with much anxiety. He saw the strain to nerve and heart was telling upon her, and yet he felt it would be cruel to remove her by any professional authority.

“You are not doing too much, Miss Daisy?” he asked one day, seeing Daisy's white face, and

noticing that she was more silent than usual,—she was going upstairs with some freshly-gathered flowers for her aunt's room; the doctor had followed her in from the garden.

"Oh! no, thank you," she replied, smiling a little tearfully; "I am only so dreading for her to go before my uncle returns,—it would be such a cruel blow to him;" and Daisy paused upon the landing, and sank down with an almost hopeless air into a chair which stood there.

"We will pray that she may be spared," said the doctor, earnestly, and in lower tones; then he added, "Daisy, is *this* the secret that we spoke about once?"

Daisy bent her head in an assent, and the tears flowed freely as she said,—

"And the *whatsoever* did not cover it! Oh, Dr. Coultonsby, if you *knew* how I had prayed!"

"This may be the beginning of the answer," said the doctor, placing his hand upon Daisy's arm. Daisy had risen, and she and the doctor were standing together by the open staircase window; the honeysuckle and roses were bending in the gentle breeze, fragrant and beautiful, their delicious

perfume enriched by a recent shower. Daisy shook her head as the doctor continued,—

“He said, ‘What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’ We will at least *trust Him*. Supposing that in this terrible illness your aunt were brought out of darkness into light, spiritually, what you pray for would quickly follow ; remember, ‘Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who *healeth* all thy diseases.’”

“Yes,” said Daisy, musingly, “the Lord Jesus healed all the sick that were brought to Him : *that were brought*,—that means the friends took them, perhaps they themselves were too ill to know how ill they were,—but the *healing* was theirs just the same. Oh ! it must be quite as true to-day as then !”

For answer, Dr. Coultonsby said quietly, “Let us pray;” and bending his head, he prayed audibly for faith to bring their sick to the Lord Jesus Christ, for faith to leave them there with Him, never doubting His power to touch and heal. Daisy’s head was bent, too. She said “Amen” as the prayer ended, and her face was bathed with a new light as she turned it for an instant towards Gerald Coultonsby.

"I have got back my hope again," she said, gently; and she went on with almost a buoyant step to her aunt's room.

Late the same evening Daisy was sitting in the sick room. Her aunt was quieter. The nurse was dosing in the arm-chair. Suddenly Mrs. Brown roused, and for the next half-hour the cry was for brandy.

"Brandy! give me brandy!" How the cry pierced Daisy's heart! And each time she met it with some soothing word, every now and then offering the patient something else to take, saying, in a voice most soft and tender, yet very firm and unflinching,—

"Here, dear auntie, try a little of this instead. You know we must not give you what the doctor has forbidden."

And with a weary wail, Mrs. Brown would take what was offered, then turn upon her pillow and moan again.

At length there came a pause. Daisy thought that her aunt was sleeping; but as she glanced from time to time towards her pillow, she saw that her eyes were open and fixed upon the ceiling.

Then she heard her own name called, and hastening nearer, she heard these words, spoken in a whisper,—

“Daisy child, you believe in prayer; it says somewhere, ‘And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name I will do it;’ will you ask that this thirst—this horrible craving, may be removed?”

Daisy tried to keep back her sobs as she bowed her head in answer. Mrs. Brown continued, and her voice was full of suppressed emotion,—

“Call the household up—Linda and Miss Humphreys, Margaret and cook—all pray for me! Quick, quick,—the craving is coming on again!”

Arousing nurse by a gentle touch and whispered word, Daisy fled with beating heart to summon the others to the room of sorrow. It was Linda's first visit since *that* night. A hurried explanation, and they all followed Daisy upstairs. Linda came tremblingly, and never raised her eyes as she entered the room and walked to the end of the bed, where she at once sank upon her knees, and buried her face in her hands. Miss Humphreys knelt next, Margaret came afterwards, then the

cook. Daisy knelt down nearer to her aunt's pillow.

It was a most touching sight. The most solemn silence prevailed in the room. Mrs. Brown, with hands folded in prayer, lay with closed eyes. Daisy's heart was beating audibly, but the hopefulness and peace which had come to her that morning helped her now. Was not the prayer being answered at last? That her aunt should *herself* feel that her only help could be brought to her by prayer,—this surely was a proof that she was being *prepared* for the healing."

"Pray, Daisy, so that all may hear and join," said Mrs. Brown, softly; and Daisy prayed audibly. The words came with the rush of feeling. Daisy was for the moment utterly unconscious of everything saving the fact that one that was sick was craving to be healed, and that to possess the desire was to be able to claim what was already *waiting*. Very simple, very tender was the pleading,—

"Dear Lord Jesus, do it for Thy Name's sake. Oh! Gentle Saviour, the same to-day as yesterday, heal the sick one whom we bring to Thee. Amen."

wilt do it, Lord. We know it would have been done long ago, had we but had the faith to come to Thee with whole-hearted belief in Thy power." Then Daisy specified the need yet more clearly. She asked for the craving to be taken away. She pleaded for the heart so tossed about by restless thoughts and feverish longings to be made calm by the voice of Him who stilled the raging of the storm with His "Peace, be still."

All this time Mrs. Brown lay perfectly quiet, excepting for an occasional sob. She joined in the Lord's Prayer when Daisy repeated it at the conclusion of her own, and then again there was complete stillness in the room.

Some one had watched the scene unnoticed; he had stood just outside the opened door, stayed in his coming in by Daisy's voice in prayer. He bent his head, and his face betrayed signs of deep emotion. He left in the next pause, his own heart nearer prayer than it had ever been. The "some one" was Dr. Allen.

At length they rose from their knees. From beginning to end it had only lasted a few moments; but Daisy felt to have lived hours in those

moments. The servants crept away on tip-toe, for they thought their mistress was sleeping. Good Miss Humphreys walked away to the window at the further end of the room, while Linda went softly round to her mother's pillow, and sank on her knees there. Daisy was the first to leave the room. In rising from her knees, she had caught sight of two figures crossing the paddock, and, with a beating heart, she ran down-stairs, through the garden to the gate of the paddock, and then into the arms of her uncle, with a long, lingering, loving embrace.

Dr. Coultonsby, the other of the two whom Daisy had noticed from the window, stood on one side. He had received a telegram from the rector that morning, asking him to meet him at a station some three miles away, the nearest point to the village, and he had driven Mr. Brown home, stopping at the paddock gate to save time, as to go to the house through the village, by which way he had sent on the luggage, would mean another ten minutes' drive. The rector had listened very eagerly to all the details of his wife's illness as they had driven from the station ; and as Daisy's name

had more than once been mentioned, he was very thankful to get speech of her before he reached the house, knowing that from her more than from others he was likely to get the latest news.

"Thank God you have come, uncle!" were Daisy's first words. Then she added, smiling through her tears, "I have such good news for you;" and she spoke of her aunt's desire for prayer that the craving might be removed.

In the meanwhile, Linda was kneeling beside her mother's pillow. Mrs. Brown had been silent for some time, with closed eyes, ever since they had all risen from their knees. She opened her eyes now, and called very softly, "Daisy."

Linda buried her face more deeply in the bed-clothes, and was silent.

Then Mrs. Brown put out her hand, trying to feel for Daisy where she had knelt when she had prayed. The hand touched Linda's hair; she lifted her face, and kissed it tenderly, almost reverently. The next moment and she had risen from her knees and was kissing her mother's cheek. Mrs. Brown was in tears; but the weeping was very silent.

"Do not cry, mammy darling," whispered Linda, tenderly; "we will not remember anything about the past and its darkness, we will only think of the brightness and hope of the future. Daisy has asked for help, and it is sure to come; and you are my own beautiful and loving mother—dearer to me than ever!" and Linda pressed her cheek fondly to her mother's.

Mrs. Brown gave a little start.

"Do you *really* love me still, Linda, in spite of—everything?" she asked, timidly.

"Yes, mother darling," said Linda, warmly, "I love you more because of that everything, because I know what bitter sorrow you have passed through; and oh! mother, will you forgive me for my part in it all? I have so often said things which could not have helped you, and have done things which were not wise; and you—you have been so noble and good to spare me sorrow. Oh! what comfort is there in anything now but in thinking of the love of God! Let us just forget everything but that, and all the old things of the past will disappear and be forgotten, and we shall have a quite new life *from* Him and *in* Him!"

Linda had spoken softly, with one arm round her mother's neck. A light seemed to gather upon Mrs. Brown's face as she replied in a gentle whisper,—

“I think the beginning may be here, Linda, my child, but the new life will be—*there*. I know I cannot live long. My days have indeed been full of sorrow and darkness, but it has all been my own fault. I yielded in those days when I might have resisted, until to resist, when tempted, was almost an impossibility,—*almost*, not *quite*; for had I sought His strength, and not trusted in my own, I need not have failed!”

Linda and her mother were still taking softly, Miss Humphreys and the nurse being at the other end of the room, when Daisy entered, and very gently broke the news of her uncle's arrival.

XVI

WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF."



XVI.

"WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF."

" 'I am sore at heart, my father,
With evil I cannot stem ;
My faults are so strong and many,
And I cannot conquer them.'

" 'Is evil so strong within you ?
Nay, my heart then weepeth too ;
But, son, there is One still stronger,
He offers His strength to you.' "

IT was Sunday afternoon. Only a few days had elapsed since Mr. Brown's return to the rectory. Mrs. Brown was sinking rapidly. This last attack had been too much for a heart already greatly diseased. It was the condition of the heart which had made Dr. Allen fear from the first that recovery was impossible. From the day when Daisy had offered up that prayer no mention had been made of stimulants. The patient never by word or sign betrayed the least desire for that for which she had previously hour after

hour so loudly called. She lay, as a rule, very calm and tranquil. Sometimes she referred to the past with a weary sigh ; but while expressing herself to be truly penitent, she would repeat over and over again, "God is a God of love. He has promised to forgive all who confess their sins. I cannot doubt His mercy. I *do* confess my sins, and I know that He forgives *me!*" At such times Mr. Brown would kneel beside her in praise and prayer, and the sick chamber seemed to those who ministered to the dying woman to be more and more the abode of the Lord.

Mrs. Brown had pleaded that all would take their turn that day, and go to church.

Mr. Brown took the morning service, Dr. Coultonsby reading the lessons for him, in the absence of Mr. Reynolds, who had gone to a neighbouring village. In the afternoon, Daisy and Miss Humphreys went to the barn service. As usual there was a large gathering, and, as usual, the service was most impressive. Daisy noticed during the singing of the first hymn that, sitting somewhere to her left, was Mr. Jones the grocer. Knowing

the history of her aunt's late access to stimulants, Daisy was not likely to feel any other than a great repugnance towards him, yet an indescribable feeling of pity took possession of her that day, and almost unconsciously she found her heart pleading that the service might be helpful to Mr. Jones.

Dr. Coultonsbys had named during the week that the grocer had been there the previous Sunday, so Daisy was less surprised at his presence than she would otherwise have been.

The address appeared to touch Mr. Jones greatly ; he was moved even to tears towards the close, and Daisy's prayer for him became more definite,—“ Lord, save him *now*. There is no limit to Thy mercy. Thou hast said, ‘ Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.’ Oh ! do help him to come.”

The doctor walked home afterwards with Daisy and Miss Humphreys.

“ Do you not think,” said Daisy, as they entered the rectory gardens, “ that Mr. Jones would be willing to receive a visit from you, Dr. Coultonsbys ? I am sure his heart is touched ; and,

oh! if only he could be brought to decision now!"

"I feel deeply interested in the man," said the doctor, thoughtfully; "he lives so completely alone, only having Mrs. Scrivens to go in for a few hours daily to see after things. I am afraid he has not helped that poor woman to keep out of temptation. I would gladly do something for him. I think I *will* look round to-night!"

The doctor did go, on his way home from church that evening. He found Mr. Jones at home, sitting in his back parlour, looking very dejected.

"Forgive my intruding," said the doctor, pleasantly, as he took a seat opposite to Mr. Jones; "but I have so longed for a quiet talk with you; I *felt* you were not happy."

"As a man sows so shall he also reap," said Mr. Jones, in a very melancholy voice. "I can't expect anything different after my reckless and wasted life."

"Do you remember what the Prodigal Son did when 'he came to himself'?" asked the doctor, quietly: "he arose and came to his father. Mr. Jones, what *he* did, *you* may do."

"Ah! sir," said Mr. Jones, "my case is different; the Prodigal Son ruined himself by his waywardness and sin, but he did not—at least we hear nothing about it—break a loving wife's heart, and—and trample on every other holy affection of child or friend."

"No, we do not hear that he did these things," replied Dr. Coultonsby, thoughtfully; "but I think that if he had done them, it could have made no difference to the wealth of forgiveness which awaited him the moment he arose and came to his father."

"You mean to say," said Mr. Jones, "that if I too arise and go to my Heavenly Father, I too may be forgiven; but *how* can one such as I am 'arise'?"

"You can walk away from your sins, you can prove your earnestness by your desire to get away from this far-off country," said the doctor, solemnly.

"You mean," said Mr. Jones, "that I am to give up my lying and cheating, I am to speak the truth, give right weight, and—become a pauper, for that is what it means? There is not one man

in fifty who can *afford* to be honest and keep a conscience."

"‘The blessing of the Lord, *it maketh rich*,’" said the doctor, in the same solemn tones as before. "Those only are the truly prosperous who are blessed of God. If in the past you have been other than honest——"

"Other than honest!" interrupted Mr. Jones, excitedly; "I tell you, sir, I have been base and devil-serving in every way. I am the fool that has said in my heart daily and hourly, ‘There is no God’! Do you think I dare have told falsehood upon falsehood to get rid of my goods,—do you think I could have driven the woeful trade of tempting men and women to drink, when I knew myself how great a curse that very drink could become to them, as it had become to me,—do you think *any* man honestly believing in a God who searches the heart and prospers a man with health of soul according to his just and honest purposes,—do you think *any* man could act as I have done if he did not say *in his heart*, ‘There is no God’?"

"No, sir! Fools make a mock at sin. I am

one of these. Before I came here I passed for a religious man, and was deacon of a Baptist Chapel ; it paid me to do it, I secured my chief customers from the congregation to which I attached myself ; but I said in my heart just the same, ‘ There is no God,’ and practised accordingly. When I came here, I gave up professing anything, and people have thought me to be an atheist ; while my heart was perhaps no blacker than when I had the outside respectability of being a deacon. What hope can there be for such a man as myself ? No, sir, I am cursed because of my sin. I have sown *bad* seed in days when I might have chosen *good* seed, and I am reaping now the result of that sowing. I need no greater punishment than to know the hideous blackness of my own soul, and to feel, as I do to-day, lost* —utterly lost !”

“ Thank God that you *do* feel this ! ” exclaimed Dr. Coultonsby, warmly. “ The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and to save *the lost*. And He is *seeking* you, or you would have gone on still in your sin, and have never realized the hideous blackness of your own heart. It is for *you* to decide whether

He shall *save* you. Will you *let* Him do it? Will you come to Him, base, vile, wretched, *just as you are*, and let Him cleanse your sin away in His own Blood? He has the power to do this. For this He died. His death has already atoned for your sin. You are only asked to believe—to *trust*. My dear friend, what is to hinder your doing it *now*?"

* * * *

It was eleven o'clock when Gerald Coultonsby left Mr. Jones. He had been with him nearly three hours. The last hour had been taken up by confessions which made the doctor's heart beat very quickly, and which made him realize a truth which before this had only half-dawned upon him. He walked away from the grocer's house a much sadder man than he had come there. And yet, in the midst of this sadness, he *possessed* a joy which he had only before thought to be somewhere near to him.

XVII.

THE DOCTOR'S POSSESSION.



XVII.

THE DOCTOR'S POSSESSION.

“Still in loving, still in loving,
Not in being loved, is joy.”

THE doctor walked round by the rectory. He would tell by the lights whether the house was closed. He thought it more than probable that, unless Mrs. Brown had somewhat rallied, they would all be sitting up to-night. He had no intention of going in. Dr. Allen would have been round during the evening, possibly was there now. If he could do so without disturbing any one, he would inquire of Margaret how the patient was, and then go home.

As the doctor, passing down the carriage drive, drew near to the side door, he saw that all the lights were burning. They had not attempted to close yet for the night. The door stood partly open. Dr. Coultonsby entered, drawing it gently

to behind him ; but as he did so, there was a tap from the outside, and Daisy tripped in, her eyes a little swollen with weeping, her hair pushed back from her forehead. She had been round the garden to refresh her aching brow, and had only hastened in upon seeing the doctor enter.

"I am late," said he, extending his hand to Daisy ; "but I was passing, and thought I should so like to hear the latest news."

"She is sleeping a little at intervals," said Daisy, in those subdued and saddened tones which watchers by the sick bed often have when weariness of body and of heart shadow for a time a voice which naturally thrills with buoyancy and hopefulness. "I have come down for half-an-hour before taking my place for the night."

"Will you come in here a moment," said the doctor, leading the way into the library ; "you should not be standing, and I want to speak to you about Mr. Jones—I have only just left him !"

"I am *so* glad you have been," said Daisy sitting down in a low chair, and the doctor taking a seat opposite to her. "I cannot tell what makes me yearn over him so. I suppose it is because

he is all by himself in the world, and perhaps has no one to pray for him."

"He greatly needs *our* prayers," said the doctor, laying great stress upon the "our;" and he continued,—

"Ever since those sea-side days, you and I have prayed together for one object, have we not? and the answer is ours to-day! We will pray for him—Mr. Jones—now, and plead that he may truly repent and be saved."

"Yes," said Daisy, musingly, "we shall have more hope than ever, seeing that my poor aunt has so really changed. Oh, it is wonderful! But how sad to think she is dying! If only she might have lived to *prove* to every one the change which has taken place."

"*He* doeth all things well," said the doctor, solemnly; "we will leave it with Him, Daisy;" then he added, thoughtfully, "We shall all miss her, and you—you have seen so much sorrow already when your dear mother was taken,—this will open old wounds, and make you feel, I fear, that you are alone in the world, without either father or mother!"

"You do not know," said Daisy, softly, "that I am not sure of my father being dead. It is more than twelve years since I saw him. I should not know him again, and I am afraid I should find it very hard to love him; but I do pray for him daily, and sometimes I think that I would do almost anything if I were privileged to minister to him if he were in sickness or need. I long to tell him of my mother's death, and of her prayer for him; and I yearn to throw myself on my knees before him, and to plead,—oh! how earnestly,—‘Dear father, love my mother's Saviour, and live for Him as *she* did.’"

"But I am letting you into some of my heart's secrets. Tell me about your visit to Mr. Jones. I am so interested, and I do so want to help you if I can;" and Daisy drew her chair a little nearer to the doctor's, while he answered,—

"It seems so very natural to ask you to help me in my work, Daisy. I always feel so sure of your sympathy, and know that what you do you will do well."

Daisy blushed as she said softly, "You helped me to the *being* which always precedes the *doing*."

Oh! Dr. Coultonsby, I cannot tell you all your services were to me at the sea-shore that summer. They brought me to *feel* the reality of everything. *I do* thank you so very much!"

Dr. Coultonsby smiled as he said earnestly, "Some day, Daisy, I will ask you to return to me the help you say I gave you. I am almost afraid to put my wish into words, lest I should startle you. Our friendship has been so sweet, even in the six years of separation. I have prayed daily for you and for your *secret*. And who can thus pray for any one without feeling a sort of sacred pleasure in a silent yet holy companionship? In all those years I prayed for you as the Daisy I remembered on the sea-shore. I came here to find you altered; the child had become the woman. At first I felt awed and almost saddened; I had lost the dear *child*-friend who had lived in my heart for six years . . . but soon—oh, how soon!—I found, if I had lost the child-friend, I possessed one with more thought, more earnestness, more loving tenderness. Then a new thought was mine. I could not be satisfied in having you simply as my *silent friend*; I wanted you daily, hourly, to

help me in my work, to be my companion in leisure hours—to——

“Daisy, forgive me—I have no right to tell you this now, when you are overwrought—but, my darling, how can I keep it back another hour! Something is happening which will prove a heavy trial to you, and I yearn to protect you by my love. I long for you to feel secure in a friendship which has grown too steadily to alter or abate. Daisy, give me the right to shelter you in my own strong love! Tell me that I am free to love you, free by-and-bye to claim you as my wife!”

The doctor had risen from his seat, and now he knelt before Daisy, and tried to draw down gently from her face the hands which had risen there, when he first spoke of his own affection for her. But the hands would not come away with gentle drawing, and he continued to plead,—

“We are one in faith, one in our purpose in life, one in desire to spend and be spent in our Master's work. Daisy, my darling, the whole of my heart is thine, give to me now but a part of yours, and I will wait any time for the rest to follow!”

Still the hands covered the blushing face, and no answer came.

Gerald Coultonsby continued his pleadings ; there was a deep pathos in every word. He was desperately in earnest, although so gentle, fearing to alarm Daisy, yet longing to convince her. He did not *expect* she could then and there return his love with all the passion and fervour of the affection he was offering her, but to get the faintest shadow of a promise that perhaps some day it might be possible for her to care for him,—this would have satisfied him ; for it would have given him the right he longed to possess,—the privilege of having the power to protect Daisy, were such protection necessary, in an hour of special trial.

At length there came a pause. Daisy had not altered her position. Gerald had risen to his feet, placing his hand upon Daisy's shoulder. The silence was growing unbearable to him. Never until this moment had he felt the strength of his own love. What if it should be refused ? What if Daisy were to plead that she had not seen enough of life to make this great decision ? Had

he taken an ungenerous advantage of her? Her heart was bowed with the sorrow of her aunt's nearness to death; she would be longing for sympathy; and had he offered her the sympathy she craved, with the grave condition of accepting his love with it?

Gerald Coultonsby felt troubled, blamed himself for his impetuosity, thought that, after all, he had acted selfishly, and in no way worthily. What must Daisy think of him?

"Daisy," he said, in a tone very much subdued, "do give me *one* look, *one* word, if only to tell me I have not pained you."

Then the hands gently fell away from that blushing face, and Daisy looked up. What could Gerald have seen in that look to answer it by taking Daisy within his strong, manly arms and kissing her again and again, his own face the while bathed with a holy light?—

As Daisy hid her blushing cheeks on Gerald's shoulder, she whispered shyly,—

"It has come upon me so suddenly. You have always been my *best friend*. I did not know until you spoke just now all that that meant, but I am

sure I already love you—just a little, as *you* ask to be loved !”

There was no time for longer conversation. The two whose hearts that night had been thus blended in one were not likely to forget the solemnity of the hour in their own new-found joy.

“I fear the half-hour is up, my darling,” said Gerald, looking at his watch.

Daisy looked at hers and exclaimed, “Yes, more than up ! It is forty minutes since I left my poor aunt’s room. I must go at once.”

“There is still something I wanted to say to you, Daisy,” said Gerald, in hesitating tones ; “but it must not be said now. You will spare me a few moments to-morrow, whatever happens, for it is important, darling.”

“You shall have the few moments, Gerald, God willing,” said Daisy, blushing very red over the name which had slipped unconsciously from her lips ; “good-bye now ;” and she held out her hand.

“I think I will come with you,” said the doctor, tenderly. “I may be of some use. Go

first, darling, and ask the rector if I may come up."

And Daisy went. The rector met her on the stairs. He seemed relieved to hear that Dr. Coultonsby was in the house. Daisy found Linda by her mother's bedside. Miss Humphreys was resting on a couch in an adjoining room. The nurse was in the dressing-room, at hand when wanted.

Mrs. Brown lay breathing heavily, and only half conscious. She had been thus all the evening, refusing nourishment, and speaking only occasionally. Dr. Coultonsby asked permission to remain all night,—he could get a sleep on the library couch; and the rector very thankfully accepted the offer.

And thus the hours passed on, until dawn came, and Mrs. Brown awoke to full consciousness with rallied strength. She took leave of every one. As her husband bent over, she whispered,—

"‘More sinned against than sinning,’ you have always said of me. Dearest, I think it is partly true. Oh! do, for my sake, speak from the pulpit, warn—persuade—tell them what the love of drink

can do. . . . If only they had been through it all, they would know its terror! And why—oh! why should I have been chosen as a victim?”

A pause, and then she said slowly,—

“If we had begun our home-life without it, I never could have become fond of it. Oh! the sin and sorrow of it all. Yet He healeth, He forgiveth, He blotteth out and remembereth no more.”

Another pause, and then in very feeble tones,—

“I charge you, my beloved and patient husband, to preach to all the power of Christ to *deliver from sin*. Had I but believed this once, as I do *now*, I never need have fallen.”

Mr. Brown was weeping silently as his wife, stroking his hand very tenderly, whispered,—

“My greatest sorrow and shame have been to hurt your great soul. I feared to forfeit your love, but you have been oh! so faithful, so true, so forgiving. God bless you for it. Would that I might have lived to prove not my sorrow for the past only, but the power of Him who has sustained me ever since the hour when Daisy prayed that the craving might be removed!”

And thus Mrs. Brown spoke; and her husband

hung upon her every word. A little later and they all gathered round her in prayer; soon after which she became unconscious again. At noon she passed away.

"Another life sacrificed to a cause which lay within man's power to remove," was Dr. Allen's mental comment as he drove away from the rectory, after calling about one o'clock that day. "And," he added to himself as he whipped his horse into a canter,—a fact which led his groom to know that "the master was put out about something,"—"and if the *doctors* do not help to do away with this curse, they are surely shirking a responsibility, and perhaps—giving up a privilege. Facts are facts. If the doctor *did* use his influence against the use of alcohol either as medicine or beverage, society would soon be revolutionized. But where are the men brave enough to do it? Ah! where, I wonder?"

The brisk July breeze which gently stirred the heavy foliaged trees seemed to echo the doctor's question, "Ah! where, I wonder?" So real was the speech of the rustling leaves to the doctor that he whistled to himself almost angrily, and swept

his whip across the boughs within reach, as he continued his thought,—

“No! the time has not come yet for the medical profession as a body to take up this question. We can hold aloof and not be cowards. But no! For once I will be honest with myself. My blood is boiling to think of the sorrow I by my own folly brought to the home I have just left; while that pure-hearted girl, Daisy Snowflake, by her own gentle influence, has prevented the sorrow spreading. Her coming amongst them was just in time to stay that poor creature's child from forming tastes and habits which might have brought her to an untimely death like her mother!” And Dr. Allen suddenly pulled up and turned his horse round, finding he had driven past his next place of call.

The doctor would say in after years, when, as a whole-hearted Christian, he saw that love to Christ meant duty to man, and duty to man involved denial of self, whether personal pleasures or personal interests,—the doctor would say that he really became a total abstainer while following out a train of thought in his drive as he went his

rounds the day of Mrs. Brown's death, a vision of Daisy Snowflake and her influence for good in that way leading him on. But whatever conclusions he came to upon that day, it was many years before he absolutely gave them to the world. Possibly a combination of painful circumstances had led to thought; and as time went on, thought become purpose, until, under the influence of Christian belief, purpose became power, and Dr. Allen gave his influence for the remainder of his life to a work which he had at a time when personally silent felt in his heart to be very important in regard to the physical and moral well-being of his fellow-creatures.

XVIII.

A DISCOVERY.



XVIII.

A DISCOVERY.

"I go my way, thou goest thine ;
Many ways we wend :
Many days and many ways
Ending in one end.
Many a wrong, and it's curing song,
Many a road and many an inn ;
Room to roam, but only one Home
In the whole world to win."

DAISY did not have the promised talk with Dr. Coultonsby the next day. She was ill in bed. She was confined to her room for a week, Dr. Allen visiting her daily. Gerald Coultonsby was telegraphed for on the third day ; his father had had a paralytic seizure. The young doctor had had no opportunity of speaking to Mr. Brown, fearing to intrude upon his grief until after the funeral. Nor could he, until he had spoken to him, feel justified in writing to

Daisy. Hence he contented himself by sending a message by Linda,—

“Daisy was to take great care of herself, and on no account to attempt too much before his return.”

Linda delivered the message word for word as it was given; and when Daisy blushed a rosy red, she whispered fondly,—

“I am *so* glad for you. Mother said a few days before she died, how glad she would be if her little Daisy in years to come became the treasure of our good doctor.” And with the mention of her mother’s name, Linda’s tears, so recently dried, broke forth afresh.

At the end of ten days, Gerald Coultonsby sent word to the rectory (by Dr. Allen) that he hoped to be home the next day. His father was recovering.

That “next day” was Daisy’s first day out. She went as far as the summer-house. Miss Humphreys and Linda left her there as they went on to the village to visit a dying child. Mr. Brown had gone to London on business.

While Daisy sat there, looking very fragile and

pretty in her soft summer garments, with a thick woollen shawl thrown lightly across her shoulders, she heard distant steps upon the gravel. Her heart beat loudly, and the colour came to her cheeks. She only thought of one, and felt overjoyed at the prospect of meeting him a few hours earlier than she had expected. The steps came nearer and nearer, and then stopped altogether. Daisy looked up with a blushing face, and encountered the gaze of—Mr. Jones the grocer.

Her first thought was of indignation. How *dare* he come to the house? and if to come were necessary, how *dare* he come by that private way?

Daisy attempted to rise from her seat, but she was still weak, and the effort was too much for her. She sank back again as Mr. Jones, advancing, said,—

“Forgive the intrusion, Miss Snowflake, but I caught sight of you in the distance; and as I am leaving the village in a day or two, I thought I should like to say something to you before I went.”

Mr. Jones’s manner was so gentle, and his tone so humble, the unpleasant ring which it generally had entirely gone, that Daisy felt softened. She

could not ask him to sit down, as that would mean coming into the summer-house, and that could not be; so she said quietly,—

“Excuse my rising. I am still far from strong. You say you are leaving Dovedale. I wish you good-bye.”

“One minute, Miss Snowflake,” said Mr. Jones, in the same gentle voice; “I have a duty to discharge before I leave England, and it is to you. When in New Zealand, I met with your father, and he—he wished his love to you.”

“My father!” exclaimed Daisy, thoroughly roused. “Is it really so? Then surely you can tell me something about him?” and upon this Daisy invited Mr. Jones to sit down. He was no longer Mr. Jones the grocer to her, but Mr. Jones who knew her father intimately enough to be charged with a message from him to herself.

“He was well when I last heard of him,” said Mr. Jones, “and bitterly repentant about the past. He had never had any news of his wife’s death. Did she leave him a message? I was to be sure and ask.”

Daisy’s eyes filled with tears. Was she to send

her mother's message to her father through a stranger? But if this were her father's friend, why hesitate?

"She did, indeed," said Daisy, thoughtfully. "She wished me to tell him, if I ever saw him again, how earnestly she had prayed for him to meet her in Heaven. Mr. Jones, *is* my father a good man now?"

Mr. Jones turned his face away for a moment, and then he said with deep feeling,—

"He is a firm believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is seeking to show his true repentance by an amended life."

"I am *so* thankful," said Daisy, weeping silently; "I have so longed, so prayed for this. And am I never to see him again, to tell him that I have ever loved him, and that my mother freely forgave him? I know it would comfort him to learn this. Where is he, do you say now?"

"I know where he means to end his days," said Mr. Jones, emphatically, "and that is in New Zealand: and hence my coming up to speak to you now, for I sail for New Zealand the day after to-morrow."

"Is not this something sudden?" said Daisy remembering that Dr. Coultonsby had not allude to anything of the kind when he spoke of having seen Mr. Jones on the previous Sunday week.

"Yes, quite sudden," said Mr. Jones; "I only a week ago received a letter telling me of the death of my second wife's brother, and that he has left me his farm, in addition to a gift of ready money,—five hundred pounds or so!"

"I am very glad for you," said Daisy; adding timidly, "I hope you know whom to thank for this great mercy. You are a real Christian now. I hope! I know Dr. Coultonsby is praying much for you."

"I owe it all to the doctor," said Mr. Jones and the tears were in his eyes. "I am indeed brand plucked from the burning. My life has been a very sad one; selfishness and sin spoiling everything. But the love of a faithful wife and child often kept me from desperate deeds. Would that all prodigals had such a leverage of love to lift them up! Good-bye, Miss Snowflake. God bless and keep you! Please tell Dr. Coultonsby that I will write as soon as I reach New Zealand."

in the meanwhile I cannot thank him enough for all his kindness ;” and before Daisy knew what Mr. Jones was doing, he had taken her hand and raised it to his lips and kissed it.

She was startled, perplexed, and a little vexed. He had gone before she could speak ; and she rose and returned to the house longing for Gerald’s arrival, that she might tell him of the strange interview.

Dr. Allen looked round that evening to say that his partner had telegraphed to him to say that he must delay his return for two or three days, as his father was not so well. Daisy counted the hours for the return of the doctor ; and it was with great delight that she saw him drive up to the rectory on the morning of the third day after the arrival of his telegram. She expected that he would come at once to the library, where she and Linda were sitting at their work ; but he went first to her uncle’s study.

After some three-quarters of an hour or so, the rector came into the library, and said very tenderly to Daisy,—

“Some one is wishing to gather our Daisy, and

take her away to brighten another home. And you are willing to go, dear child?"

For answer, Daisy buried her face in her uncle's bosom.

"Come then, and let us tell the doctor," said Mr. Brown; and he led the way back to his study. (Linda had withdrawn from the library as soon as her father had spoken upon coming in; she thought Daisy might like to be quite alone with him.) It cost Mr. Brown a great deal to be so calm. In the thought of taking Daisy away from his home, he knew he should lose something that was very precious, and that had been a daily source of comfort and delight to him; but he was more than satisfied to give her to Dr. Coultonsby, whom he most thoroughly appreciated and respected; and to know that she would still be within reach, was no small solace to him.

Daisy met Gerald Coultonsby with a beaming face; and he drew her gently towards him in a mute embrace, while Mr. Brown was for the moment very busy in unfolding and cutting the *Times*.

The rector looked at them a moment afterwards, as Daisy stood looking up into the doctor's face, listening to something he was saying, with both hands clasped round his arm. She looked very delicate in her neatly-fitting black dress; but there was a lustre in her eyes which Mr. Brown had never seen there before. And he was satisfied in knowing that she was happy.

"And now, my darling girl, our friend has something to say to you which will greatly surprise you, but I want him to tell you himself," said the rector, drawing two chairs up for Daisy and the doctor, and seating himself opposite to them. "You had better begin at once, Coultonsby," added he, "as I do not think any time should be lost."

Gerald took Daisy's hand in his as he said, quietly,—

"It is about a discovery which I made on that Sunday night, Daisy,—something concerning Mr. Jones."

"Oh! if it is that, I know all about it," said Daisy, quickly, blushing at the thought of the interview in the summer-house, and how it had

ended. "Mr. Jones came up to speak to me the other day ; I was in the garden, and he saw me as he passed by the paddock. He told me he could not help coming, as he was to sail for New Zealand as yesterday ; and he had a message to deliver from my father, whom he had met out in New Zealand, before he came to England!"

"A message *from* your father!" exclaimed Gerald Coultonsby, looking at the rector in surprise.

"Yes," answered Daisy. "And it was so nice to hear of him as being now really a Christian. Mr. Jones assured me he was, and said his one desire was so to live as to atone for the past!"

"And was this all he said?" asked Gerald, eagerly.

Daisy then gave a more detailed account of the interview ; and as she paused, Gerald said very tenderly,—

"My darling, did you not for one moment suspect that Mr. Jones and your father were the same man ? for so indeed it was !"

Daisy was still far from strong, and the news, though so gently broken, was too much for her ; she gave one look of unutterable astonishment,

and then fainted quite away. Gerald Coultonsby thought of the time when she had fainted at the seaside seven years ago. Then he had left her to others; now it was his privilege not only to carry the unconscious form to the couch, but to watch for the first opening of the eyes, and to whisper the first words of tender sympathy for the pain which had caused her to faint away.

Daisy was very quickly herself again, but not equal to further conversation. It was not until the evening, when the doctor came round for an hour, that she heard from him the story of her father's life. Gerald Coultonsby did not give every detail as it had been given to him. He sought to spare Daisy the pain which he knew it would bring to her. He told her how her father, failing to do well in America, had gone to New Zealand, there to prosper for a time, but soon to gamble away his savings and come to poverty. Then he journeyed from place to place, and finally, two years ago, returned to England. He went to the village where he had left his wife and child. There was no one to give him any news about them, saving the date of Mrs. Snow-

flake's death, as Betsy Trueman had died in her almshouse, and the doctor who had attended his wife had gone abroad. Mr. Snowflake learnt that Daisy had been adopted by her mother's sister, but no one quite knew where she lived. A clergy list supplied this missing information, and Mr. Jones had run down to the village for the Sunday ; had seen Daisy in the rectory pew, but had not attempted to make himself known. He had long ago changed his name from Snowflake to Jones ; and when by accident his eye caught sight of the advertisement of a grocery business to let in the village, he had taken it. But when once at Dove-dale, he had resolved not to make himself known to Daisy until it served his purpose. This "purpose" was not a good one ; but everything had been altered by his having become concerned about his spiritual welfare.

Then Gerald told Daisy how he had dreaded for her to discover that Mr. Jones was her father, when she had no one to step in between her and her possible fate of being invited to share his home (for of this he had hinted in his confessions to the doctor that Sunday night).

Hence the hasty declaration of his affection for her, that he might have the right to a voice in any future plans. Gerald also explained that he had written to Mr. Jones from his own home, telling him of his engagement with Daisy, and asking him not to take any steps to make himself known to her until his return in a few days.

"Nothing better *could* possibly have happened," said Gerald, "than for him to be sent for thus hastily to New Zealand. It has settled his plans for him, and it also relieves us from a very sorrowful duty. We *could* not have let you go to him, Daisy, my own darling. There must be a changed life to *prove* the changed heart. How strangely things happen!"

Only Linda and Miss Humphreys were told about this strange discovery; and no one in the village had any idea that Mr. Jones was other than he represented himself to be. In a few months' time, Gerald received a letter from New Zealand; and from this he most gratefully gathered that Mr. Snowflake was in deed and in truth a decided Christian, very eagerly seeking to live the last few years of his life profitably and well.

The months after Mrs. Brown's death passed very quickly. Daisy had grown quite strong again, and was more active than ever in her uncle's parish; rendering Dr. Coultonsby great assistance also in regard to his services. She took very great interest in Mrs. Scrivens; and having got her to sign the pledge, watched over her with tender and unflagging care. She felt in this case that anything she could do was as much a responsibility as a privilege, as now she knew, beyond a doubt, that poor Mrs. Scrivens had only developed into a decided drunkard after her father's coming to the village, when, as his charwoman, she had had many opportunities of getting the drink which she had for a much longer time secretly cared for, and occasionally indulged in to excess.

Joe Scrivens was devoted to his mother; and often he would say to Daisy, with glistening eyes, "If it is the Lord's will, we will pull her through yet, miss."

And Daisy would answer cheerily, "We know, Joe, that *He* willeth not that any should perish; so we will *expect success*."

XIX.

CHANGES.



XIX.

CHANGES.

“Cheerful and happy Thy children should be,
Ever confiding, dear Saviour, in Thee :
No trial or danger we ever need fear,
Since all turn to blessings when Thou, Lord, art near ;
And sorrow itself is a friend in disguise,
If it makes us more holy, more trusting, more wise.”

THE following summer brought some changes to the rectory. The good and faithful Miss Humphreys left to live with her widowed mother, the sister who had hitherto been with her having married. Although Miss Humphreys greatly felt leaving what had been her home for so many years, she realized fully that the time had come when her services as chaperon to those two motherless girls would be no longer required, for Linda had altered her mind as to remaining single until she was eighty, and it was more than probable that she would be married

upon the same day that Daisy was, in early autumn.

Linda's engagement was a source of great happiness to her father. Since their great sorrow in the illness and death of Mrs. Brown, Linda had sadly drooped. She reproached herself so very bitterly for her part in leading her mother into the temptation of her old habit. True, she did it quite unconsciously, not realizing at all her mother's weakness; but that would not alter the fact that she had failed in her honour to her father's wishes: had she been true to him, nothing would have happened of that "miserable past." It was useless to assure Linda that the past was entirely forgiven; she failed to realize any true comfort in the fact,—failed because she could not appropriate the divine forgiveness which can alone bring to a guilty conscience and wounded spirit the *healing* it yearns for. Linda had often, when younger, in comparing her Christianity with Daisy's, said, "I am only an *outside* Christian, and Daisy is an *inside* one,—there's the difference, you see!" None knew better than Mr. Brown how true this was of his daughter; while none

yearned more earnestly than he for her complete surrender of self to Him in whom alone to abide means life and growth and, therefore, true Christianity.

Linda's depression caused every one about her so much anxiety that, finding it increased rather than wore away with time, it was determined to take her away for change of air and scene. Where to go,—this was the question? Linda begged that it should not be to the Continent; and so, after a good deal of discussion, a bracing watering-place was decided upon on the east coast.

"We shall know no one in that out-of-the-way place," Linda said to Daisy, with a faint smile, the feeblest echo of her usually bright one. "If by any chance any people come to light whom we know, we must pack up and go farther——"

"And fare worse," said Daisy, merrily. It was so irresistible to finish Linda's broken sentence. But Daisy had no thought of paining her cousin.

"You seem to make fun of my wishes," said Linda, bursting into tears; "I tell you, Daisy, I *hate* seeing people. I want to be alone. It is

all very well for you ; you have nothing to reproach yourself with in the past ; and the future is as bright as it can be for you ; while I—— Daisy, it is a dreadful thought, but I wonder sometimes why I was born. My life has been one of utter selfishness. I seem to be of no use to anybody, and—and—— ”

A flood of tears finished the sentence. Daisy was all tenderness and sympathy, but Linda refused to be comforted. So Daisy at length turned her attention to some very practical matters relating to some new serge sea-side dresses which it had been decided they should get, and by this means chased away the tears which expressions of sympathy only kept flowing. It was a great relief when, in a few days, everything was ready, and a still greater when the journey had actually been made, and they were comfortably settled in their lodgings, which were large and airy, and which faced the sea.

Nothing could have been quieter or more isolated than their lives for the first few days. They kept most exclusively to themselves, making no new friends, and not by any accident coming across

old ones. They had been there a little more than a week, when, one morning, while sitting in some covered seats upon the parade, Miss Humphreys busy with her crochet, Daisy deep in Whittier's poems, and Linda trying to "get into" a book which looked very much like one of those easily read and perhaps as easily forgotten novels, very large type and broadly margined pages, a voice, which all instantly recognized, was heard to say, speaking from the other side of the covered seats, which were placed back to back,—

"I wish we knew somebody here for your sake, Eva; it would be less lonely for you when I had to go away!"

"I shall not mind, dear," was the reply, given in a very sweet voice, but one which dragged a little, as if with the weariness of one recovering from illness; "I am sure to meet with some who will be kind to me——"

Daisy broke the sentence in two. She had risen to her feet impulsively, and now stood before the lady and gentleman, who had evidently only taken their seats just when their voices were heard.

"Mr. Reynolds! we are so glad to see you; and

is this your sister who has been so ill?" Daisy asked, the delight with which the first part of the sentence was spoken melting into tenderness as it was finished.

"Miss Snowflake! well, this is a surprise!" said Mr. Reynolds, shaking Daisy's hand very heartily, and at once introducing his sister. "Where is the rector? is he here? Miss Linda! has she come too?"

Linda answered to her own name. She appeared very bright, and not at all annoyed—Daisy was glad to notice—in being thus brought face to face with an old friend. Mr. Reynolds had been such a general favourite at the rectory while in charge of Mr. Brown's parish that spring and early summer,—now more than six months ago,—that very possibly Linda would make him an exception to the people generally whom she seemed so anxious to shun. Miss Humphreys now joined them, her crochet in one hand, and her glasses a little slipping out of their position. Others made way for them, and they all sat down on the one seat,—five abreast,—and kept up for some minutes a most animated conversation.

Norman Reynolds was not long in telling them his plans. Eva's illness (of which Daisy and Linda had heard at the time) had left her so weak, and his new home in the south, where he had accepted a curacy within a few weeks of leaving Mr. Brown's parish, lay so low, that the medical man had advised immediate change. Mr. Reynolds knew of a good boarding-house at this watering-place, presided over by an old friend of his father's—a doctor and his most charming wife—so under their care he had come to place Eva. She was to be their own private guest, sharing their sitting-room, and looking always to them for escort when doing more than just coming down to the sea.

"If she is happy here," added Norman Reynolds, "I may leave her for two or three months, arranging to come down as often as I conveniently can."

And thus it happened that Daisy and Linda found friends, after all, in this quiet little sea-side resort; the latter not caring, in spite of her previous protestations, to pack up instantly and "go farther."

Eva Reynolds and Linda soon became sincerely attached; very much to the advantage of the latter,

for Eva was both thoughtful and earnest,—a bright, sunny-hearted Christian, who, while never parading her religion, spoke, whenever opportunity offered, quite naturally and unaffectedly of her beliefs and purposes in life. Eva took for granted that Linda was a happy Christian ; and when she found this was not the case, her sorrow was so great that unconsciously Linda was moved to tears.

"Oh! you poor darling!" exclaimed Eva. "To think of all the sorrow you have been through, and with no real comfort from prayer and reading your Bible! Oh! dear—oh! dear, but I *do* pity you! To me it seems like the most terrible desolation possible to the heart's conception,—a wandering and homeless soul!"

And thus it happened that Linda found herself in almost daily converse with Eva Reynolds upon subjects she had never felt quite free to speak upon to others—not even to Daisy ; and the result, as might have been expected from her present perturbed state of mind, was most beneficial. "It was something to rest in another's belief in the reality and nearness of One who had said, "Peace, be still:" to the angry waves, and who could say

it to each troubled heart, tossed about by conflicting thoughts and perplexities and cares. This is the explanation Linda would have given of her pure enjoyment in "Eva's talks;" but she was quite unconscious that all the while her own heart was being prepared to hear for itself the gentle peace-bringing voice of its Saviour.

Eva soon regained her health and strength, and Linda's bright spirits returned much more quickly than even Daisy could have thought possible. Dr. Coultonsby came down for a few days, and, with Mr. Brown's full authority, proposed that his friend Reynolds should spend Christmas Day with him, and Eva should be the guest at the rectory; adding that it was more than possible that they might all take their Christmas dinner together. The plan met with general approval; Eva rejoicing greatly that her companionship with Linda would thus be prolonged.

Christmas Day at the rectory was a very happy one. The rector, in the midst of much that depressed him, could not help counting up his many mercies. Linda's bright spirits and healthful appearance were a source of great joy to him,

while the fact that she was evidently more truly thoughtful gave him unqualified pleasure. He very wisely forbore to talk with Linda upon the subject, but he prayed more and more earnestly that his darling child might very speedily be known by all to be a true Christian.

Eva Reynolds was engaged to a barrister. She was to be married in early spring. In the meanwhile, she was—being an orphan—living with her brother. Mr. Brown had not much difficulty in persuading Norman Reynolds to leave his sister as a guest at the rectory until within a few weeks of her marriage, when she went to an aunt's, from whose house the wedding was to take place. Linda was one of the bridesmaids, and Daisy was amongst the guests.

This wedding took place in April; in May, Norman Reynolds came for a week's visit to his friend Gerald Coultonsby. It was not difficult for the doctor to see that his friend of college days was in a state of great anxiety. Perhaps he had guessed his secret before; but men are not quick to speak of these things—at least to each other: a mother or sister may be admitted into the

sanctum of their heart's thought, when that thought only represents feeling as moonlight is akin to sunlight; but in those early days of hope and expectancy, man with his brother man is silent.

"What ails you, old fellow?" asked the doctor, affectionately, as they sat chatting together over their dessert the day of Mr. Reynolds' arrival. "You are not in your usual spirits. Are you not getting on in your work?"

Norman Reynolds hesitated with his answer—played with his dessert knife—cracked a nut—helped himself to salt, then out came his secret. All his nervousness vanished the moment thought found its first utterance in speech. His eyes sparkled and his cheeks glowed, while Linda's name was often spoken.

The outcome of all this was an interview with the rector the following morning; a long, long talk in his study. The girls and Miss Humphreys were out for the day. It was an excellent opportunity to dismiss Norman Reynolds and let Linda be none the wiser that he had proposed for her. But Mr. Brown was too true a father to play with the happiness of others in order to consider his

own comfort and pleasure. His first thoughts were certainly somewhat after this fashion : " Wifeless—Daisy soon to be married—Linda just developing into the daughter he had so longed for, so prayed for, one able to sympathize with him as in the past Daisy alone had done—was he to lose this child as soon as he in a sense had realized that he fully possessed her ? "

But the " better man " spoke out when Mr. Brown said, with deep emotion,—

" Mr. Reynolds, if my child accepts you, you may rely upon a father's blessing."

The next day was Sunday. Linda had gone with Daisy to Dr. Coultonsby's service, and the doctor and Mr. Reynolds accompanied the two girls home to tea at the rectory. There was fully an hour before tea-time, so they sauntered leisurely along.

It was not difficult for Norman Reynolds to find his opportunity of speaking to Linda. They had entered through the garden, and Norman begged Linda to sit down for a moment in the summer-house. She was quite unprepared for what followed, as Mr. Reynolds had pleaded with Mr. Brown that he might be the very first

reveal to her his affection : perhaps he was afraid that daughterly love, her anxieties about her father's future, might blind her to her own feelings in regard to himself. He yearned to watch her face as he opened his heart to her ; to gather hope from her glowing cheek, or if it must be—but of this he could not trust himself to think—to read his fate before she spoke it, in her darkening brow and cold, hard eye.

They were speaking of Norman's work as they entered the summer-house. Linda had been inquiring of his services in a little iron church which had recently been opened in a poorer part of the parish.

"Oh! it is the most enjoyable part of my work," said Norman, enthusiastically. "I certainly do get in the very poor—chiefly agricultural labourers and their families; and many of them are totally unfamiliar with such services as we have. They enjoy the singing and listen quite attentively to the preaching, and so little affects them to tears. I have asked my vicar to let us have a real mission there next autumn. I am sure they will be ready for it. We have such

grand opportunities in mission services of *getting* at the people!"

"I have never attended any mission services," said Linda; "but Eva has told me a great deal about them. Are they not going to have a mission shortly in the church Eva attends?"

"I believe so," said Norman. Then he added quickly, "Eva is so longing to welcome you to her home; she was only the other day speaking of it, wondering how soon you could be spared. She is settling down splendidly; but her happiness only makes my lot, by comparison, the harder. I miss her more and more every day. She was so bright, so unselfish. Those early days of my life at Waretown will never be forgotten; only then her illness came to interrupt it all!"

Linda rose from her seat, as if moving on, as she said, "It makes me think of the trial that lies before us when Daisy leaves us."

"Wait one minute before you go in," said Norman Reynolds, gently placing his hand on Linda's arm; "there is something I do so want to say to you: will you spare me a moment now or may I come to-morrow? I so fear to trouble

or to startle you, but I long that you should learn from my own lips a truth I have ventured to lay before your dear, good father."

Linda looked up into Mr. Reynolds' face with a surprised, almost agonized, look.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Reynolds, but please, I must go in ;" and before Norman Reynolds had time to recover breath or to review his position, Linda had fled.

There were two vacant seats at the tea-table that evening. Linda was in her room with a bad headache. Norman Reynolds was miles away, seeking to walk off his sorrow, perplexity, mortification ; one minute in hopeless despair, the next determined yet to finish, by word or letter, the untold story of his love. He had preached for Mr. Brown in the morning, and he was to have read prayers for him at night. But the rector drew his own conclusions at tea-time as to his probable chance of getting the promised help in the evening service.

Mr. Brown was just withdrawing from his vestry by one door as Norman Reynolds entered it by the other. Dr. Allen had passed him some three

miles from the village, and "given him a lift." It was only the work of a few moments to put on his surplice and follow the rector into the church. All heads were bowed in the General Confession as Mr. Reynolds took his seat. He read the lessons. His voice was perfectly calm, but the rector detected a deeper tone than usual, and the doctor and Daisy felt instinctively that the reader was appropriating to his own heart all the comfort of those sacred words.

At the close of the service, Norman Reynolds withdrew to Dr. Coultonsby's house, and there he wrote his letter to Linda. It was not the letter it would have been two hours ago. The service had calmed him. Indeed, it had done more than that; it had reminded him that although the great longing of his heart was to possess the affections of Linda, yet a greater longing gathered about and protected the lesser, namely, *to do the will of God*. Was it not more than possible that to have in his possession the love he craved might be to weaken his absolute devotion to his work in the ministry? Could he not trust the "Giver of all good gifts" to choose for him in this matter as

in all others? If the gift he longed for were right and best for him in his life devoted to God's service, might it not yet be his? and if otherwise, did not *He* know best?

Hence the letter put into Linda's feverish hand the following morning, as, after a sleepless night, she took her breakfast in bed, was one calm and manly; full of noble sentiment, yet utterly and absolutely the expression, from beginning to end, of one who had "God in all his thoughts." Linda felt awed. She had no doubt in her own mind last night as to her feeling towards Norman Reynolds; but to-day she felt a little reluctant to say an all round "No" to him.

She rose, after scarcely touching her breakfast, took her bath, and dressed hastily. She had said nothing to Daisy about the matter, although each understood that something had happened. She now sought her father's study.

He was there looking very sad, almost tearful. She put Norman Reynolds' letter in his hand without a word, and then slipped down quietly at his feet, resting her hands upon his knee and keeping her eyes fixed upon the carpet.

"Well, my darling?" said Mr. Brown, gulping down a sob,—in reading that letter so many memories had been awakened,—“and what answer do you give?”

And Linda broke into a nervous laugh as she said, “Well, it cannot be ‘Yes,’ papa, and I do not want it exactly to be ‘No,’ so I must leave it with you.”

Which state of mind the rector most wisely interpreted to mean, “Norman Reynolds had better go quite away, and wait a month or two for his answer.” So he wrote to him accordingly.

Although practically denied any intercourse at the rectory, Norman Reynolds finished his week's stay with Gerald Coultonsby. He drove with the doctor on his rounds to neighbouring villages, spent his evenings at Dr. Allen's, playing cricket or lawn tennis with some of his young people, and in this way managed to get through the days.

It was Friday afternoon. On the morrow he was to return to his work. Dr. Coultonsby had asked him, on Daisy's behalf, to pay a visit to Joe Scrivens's mother. He went, and spent some

time with her, seeking to strengthen her in her temperance resolutions.

"It was here I became a teetotaler, you know," he said to Mrs. Scrivens, by way of opening the conversation; "I was won to think about it principally by your good doctor, Dr. Coultonsby; and when I made up my mind, I made it up *thoroughly*. If I ever have a house of my own, I shall have it upon true total-abstinence principles. I shall want my servants to learn good habits and to adopt safe methods; I shall want to exercise such hospitality amongst my friends as could never be in the slightest degree a temptation to them; and I shall like to remember that in all this I am following the Master, who taught us by His apostle to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to rather reprove them."

Mrs. Scrivens listened with moistened eyes. It was so "strengthening like," she said afterwards to her husband, "to hear a handsome-looking young man talk that way. It was so nice to feel being a teetotaler was not only for those who were broken and battered about in life because of drink, but for everybody who had a mind to

think of good things and a heart to follow good ways!"

When Mr. Reynolds left Mrs. Scrivens, after kneeling with her in prayer and commending his struggling sister to God's protecting care and mercy, he bent his steps in the direction of the fields which led from one end of the village to the rectory grounds. He meant to leave the rectory grounds on his right, taking the high road to the doctor's house. Just as he entered the second field, he saw some one approaching, whom he at first took to be Daisy. A little nearer, and, with a beating heart, he discovered it was Linda.

His first impulse was to raise his hat and pass on; his next, to stop and shake hands. Linda turned a very blushing face to him, and her hand trembled. She did not draw it quickly away, but unconsciously let it linger a moment in Norman's; and quicker than thought came to that good man's heart the sweet inspiration of hope.

Linda could never say how it happened that she did not get across the fields that night, but turned back and entered the rectory grounds, lingering for an hour, or two, or three, or four, she could not

be sure which it was,—a time which nothing can record save feeling, which has no dial deciphered by the human eye,—lingering in the summer-house, and at length quite naturally asking “Norman to stay to supper, papa would be so glad to see him!”

And Daisy never forgot how her uncle’s voice trembled at family worship that night, when he read the hundred-and-third Psalm, and at the conclusion of a short extempore prayer led them all in the General Thanksgiving. Perhaps, as other fathers have experienced, Mr. Brown was awakening to the fact that to give a daughter to a good and Christly man is not to lose her, but to gather about her the shelter and protection of a husband’s love; and because this is so, to secure to all who love her the restful joy of believing her cared for and happy.

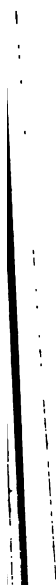
Alas! for the parents who only seek for their children an earthly home and human joys! Such are ambitious to get their daughters “well settled” in life, forgetful that *£ s. d.* and position do not represent the true “well settling!” A little more anxiety on the part of parents to give their

daughter *only* to a good man's keeping, training that daughter from earliest childhood to look upon marriage as too sacred a condition of life to be approached carelessly or with trifling feelings, and because of that never to be associated even in thought with one other than a true God-fearing man, a seeker first of the Kingdom of God, and because of that, a possessor of the best position and the best riches likely to secure happiness to a home,—a little more thought on the part of parents, and there would be fewer troubled homes and broken married lives than there are to-day !

Although it somewhat involved his own future home plans, Mr. Brown, before many weeks had passed away, felt unqualified satisfaction in Linda's engagement.

XX.

CONCLUSION.



CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

“Lord, Thou needest not, I know,
Service such as I can bring,
Yet I long to prove and show
Full allegiance to my King :
Thou an honour art to me,
Let me be a praise to Thee.”

NO residence in the village was more picturesquely situated than Dr. Coultonsby's new house. It stood in the very midst of the pretty scenery which Linda's brush had so diligently painted as a picture for her father's study. But it was only when Daisy came to "The Rookery" as its mistress that the doctor felt his new house to be his *home*. This took place in September. There had been a double wedding at the rectory, and everything had been "so beautifully arranged," as Linda expressed it, that no one had reason to feel unhappy: there were to be no "sorrowful partings," such as clouded the happiness of many

a bright wedding day; for having represented to the Bishop that he would like, in large measure at least, to retire from parish work, Mr. Brown had begged that the living might be given to his future son-in-law; and as this plea was supported by a very largely signed petition on behalf of the parishioners (amongst whom Mr. Reynolds had made himself very popular when he took three months' charge for the rector), the request had been most gracefully complied with. It seemed a very natural sequence to such an arrangement that Mr. Brown should live on "in the old home," the honoured guest of the new rector, and, as far as strength and inclination inclined him, his co-worker in the parish.

It is a lovely afternoon in October; brilliant sunshine and a soft south wind. Nothing could have been better for the great happiness of a certain number of poor women, the wives and mothers of the village, who have gathered, at the invitation of Dr. and Mrs. Coultonsby, for an hour or two in the Rookery garden, which is to be followed by a very early tea on the lawn, if warm enough, otherwise in a room at the top of

the coach-house. Daisy and Linda are very busy, now chattering with one or another of the aged women, now relieving a tired young mother's arms of the bonny baby which has, as a matter of course, accompanied her to this afternoon's treat. The poor women watch them about everywhere, speaking of them as "the two brides," and very much appreciating their privilege of examining quite closely to the smallest detail the dresses they are wearing, etc., etc. Of course there are various arguments in whispered and awkward conferences as to which of the two is the prettier, which looks the happier, etc., etc. But all acknowledge the difficulty of choice; both faces are so radiant, each youthful bride looks so attractive, and in her own special way "so lovely;" so at least these women think. The gathering is to inaugurate a Mothers' Meeting, which Daisy is hoping to hold weekly in Dr. Coultonsby's barn, as the building is still called in which he has his Sunday afternoon services. The mothers spend a very happy hour sauntering along the winding paths; for the doctor has planted his house by the side of a small wood,

and has cut down the trees here and there, in order to make two or three pathways, which bear off in different directions. From discussing the two brides, they very naturally go on to speak more exclusively of the doctor's dear young wife, and more than one says, "Bless her! she deserves this beautiful home if any one does!" while some view the matter from a different stand-point, and, speaking loudly in praise of the doctor himself, admit that no one is so worthy to be his wife as Miss Daisy.

Linda, who has been joined by her father and husband, is still somewhere within sight, when Daisy goes towards the house to complete the preparations for tea upon the lawn. Joe Scrivens's mother follows her as far as the morning-room, through the window of which Daisy enters the house. She knows that Mrs. Coultonsby is wanting to speak to her alone, and she wonders whether this is not the best time.

"Yes, come in, Mrs. Scrivens," says Daisy, observing her. "One minute, and I will be back with you;" and with a bounding footstep the young



mistress of that bright home trips off to her kitchen. In addition to her own servants, the faithful Margaret is there from the rectory. She soon assures herself that the arrangements are going forward satisfactorily to enable the tea to be quite ready by four o'clock, and she then returns to Mrs. Scrivens, with whom she begins an animated discussion upon a topic which is evidently very near to her heart. They have been talking very warmly for some few minutes, when Daisy says,-

"And now I want *you* to help me, Mrs. Scrivens. We will form the society, you know, quite amongst ourselves, and call it the 'Dovedale Women's Temperance Society;' and you must help me to get all the young and all the old women of the village to belong to it; because when we have once secured the wives and mothers, the husbands and children will soon become teetotalers, and we shall have *such* a happy village! Oh! I think it will be just lovely!"

"What will be 'just lovely'?" says a voice behind Daisy; and her husband, who has entered unperceived, looks down smilingly upon Daisy's

animated face, while Mrs. Scrivens rises from her seat and drops a low curtsy.

"Oh! it is our scheme for a Women's Temperance Society," Daisy replies. "I am going, you know, to say just one word to our guests after they have had tea, and I have been asking Mrs. Scrivens to speak for a moment or two, and tell them about the blessings of becoming a teetotaler. I want her to understand that, coming from one of themselves, it will be so especially helpful. I do not want a speech—only a word to two!"

"I came to ask you not to begin your little meeting too early, dearest," urges the doctor, "as I want particularly to be with you, and I am called away to Broadfield" (a village two miles off). "Good-bye for the present! Your experience will help us all, Mrs. Scrivens," he adds, kindly, and in two or three months' time we must have a tea-meeting and invite all the husbands!"

"Oh! that *will* be nice, sir," Mrs. Scrivens answers, wiping away her tears, which are flowing freely. "No one would be happier to come than my John. He doesn't know how to be grateful enough for what he calls the little Temperance

Society which we have amongst ourselves at home. Oh! what blessings we have to be thankful for! I feel though very down at times, and doubt myself sadly; but then, sir, I always try to think of your sermon the Sunday you preached from the text, 'Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins;' that means, you told us, sir, you know, that He saves us from their *power*, as well as from the death which they bring! And I find nothing helps me so much the very moment the craving comes as—whatever I am doing—just to close my eyes for a second and think of His Name. It is quite wonderful what it does for me!"

"The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe," says the doctor, solemnly; while Daisy looks very thoughtful, a light shining within her eyes such as comes there only when her heart is deeply touched.

"Ah! Mrs. Scrivens!" Dr. Coultonsby continues, "if only people would claim the help which is theirs in a living Saviour, hour by hour and moment by moment, as the need arises, life would be one



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shall save His people from their sins' ? ”**

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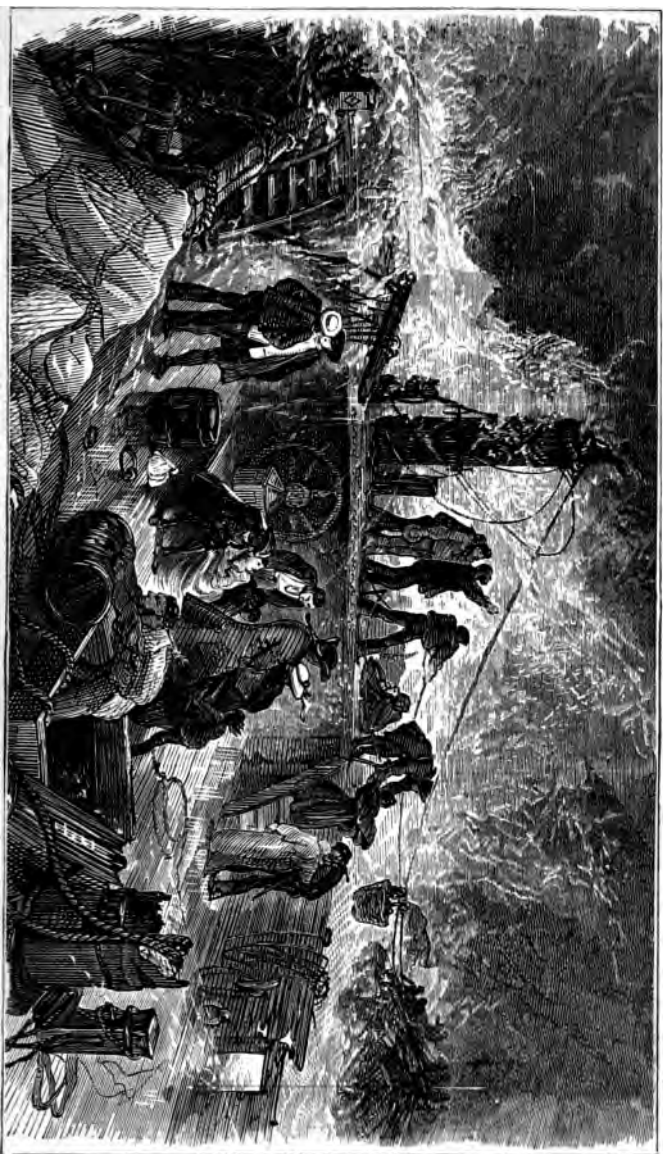
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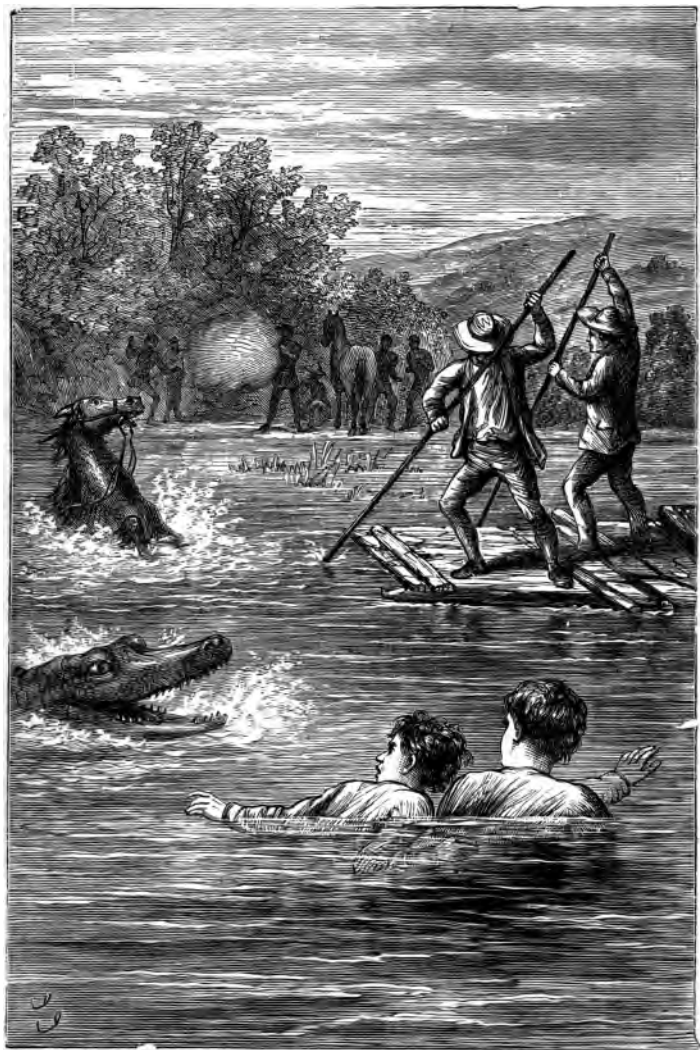
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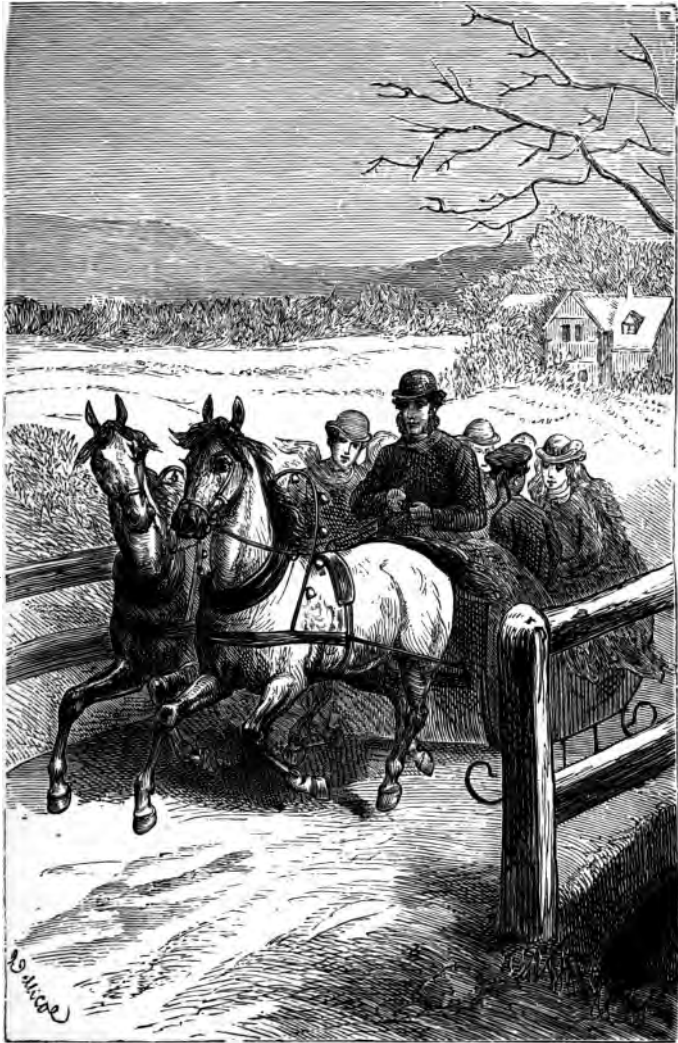
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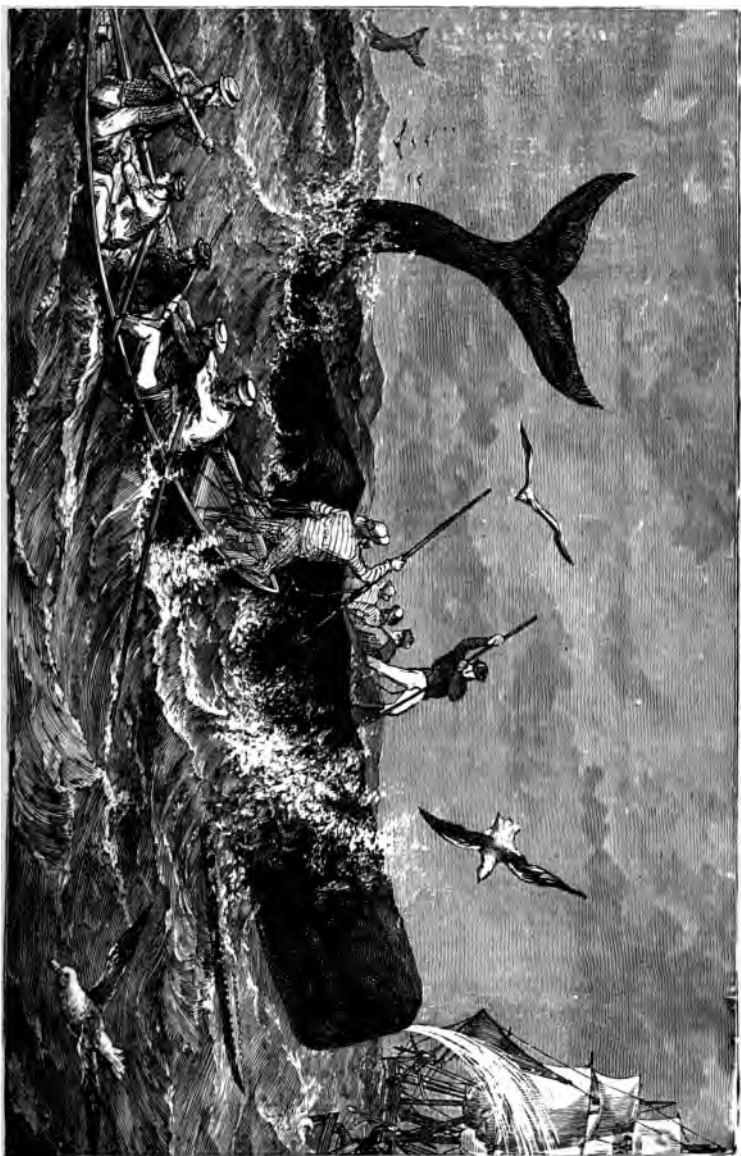
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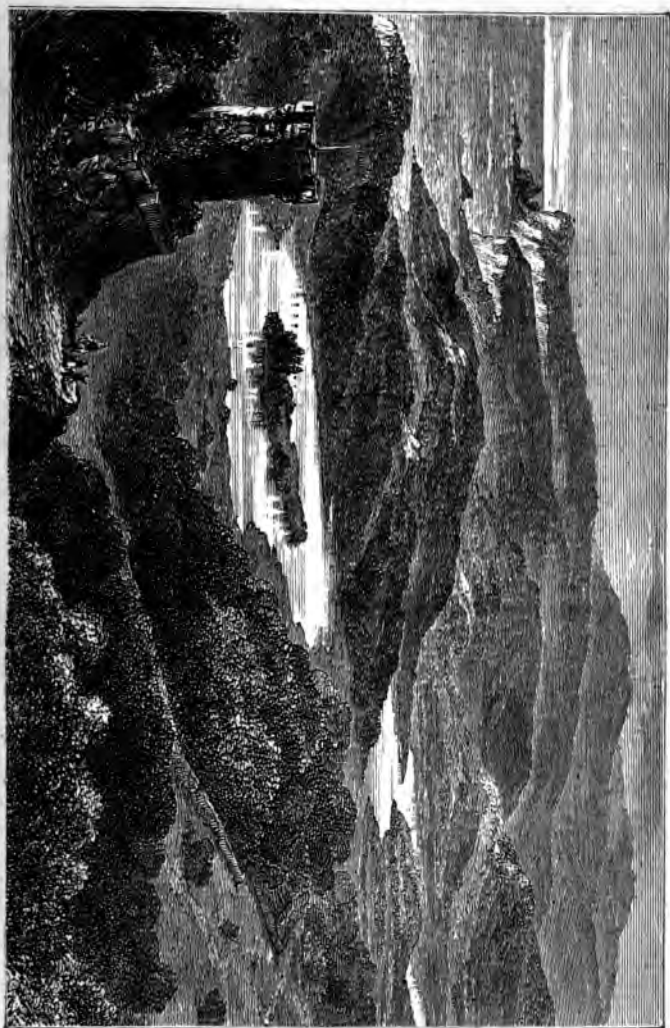
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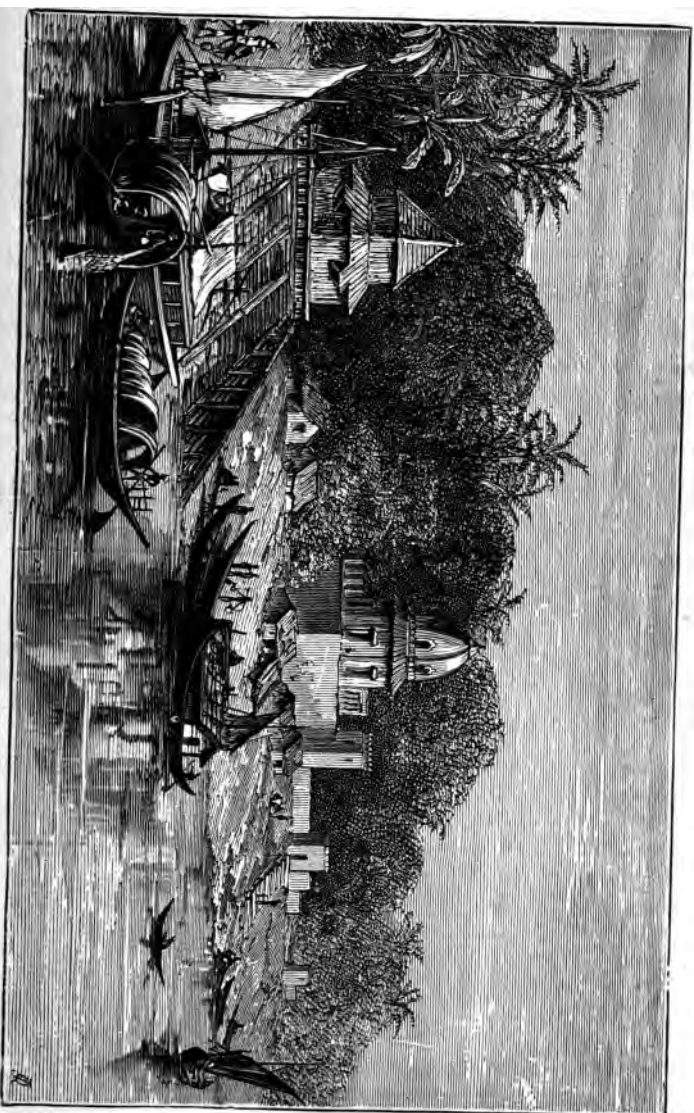
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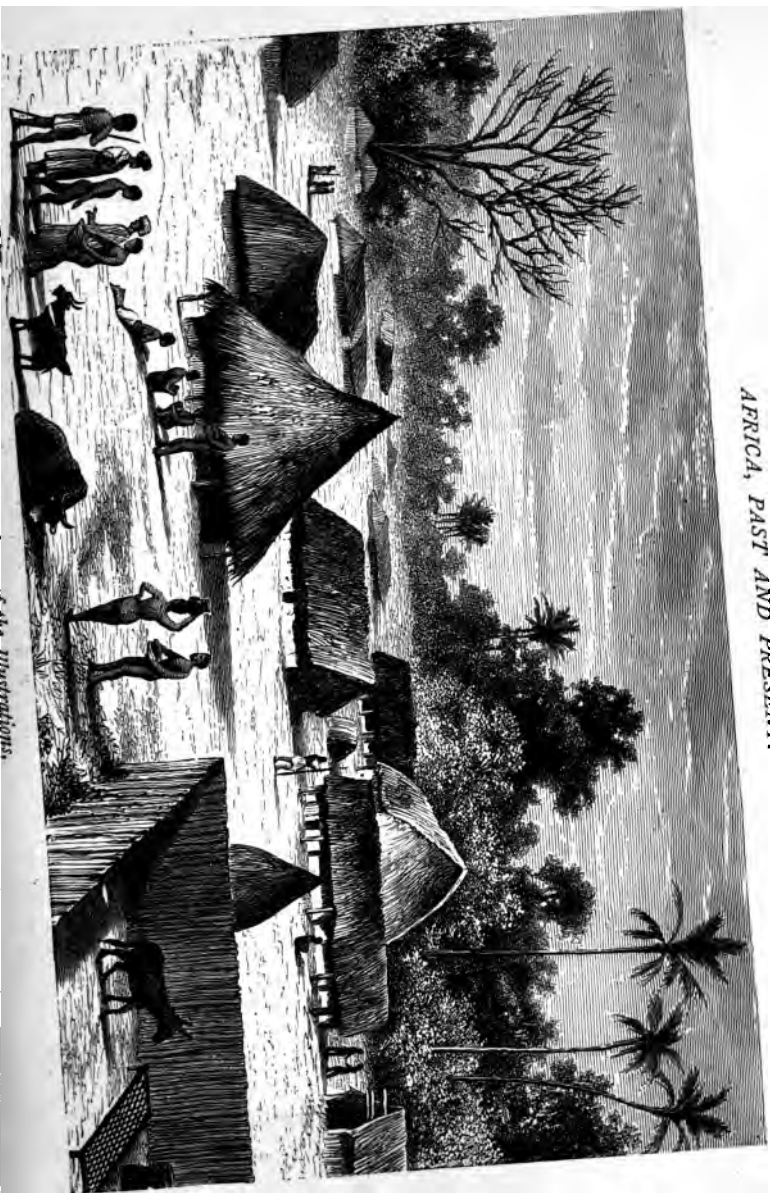
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